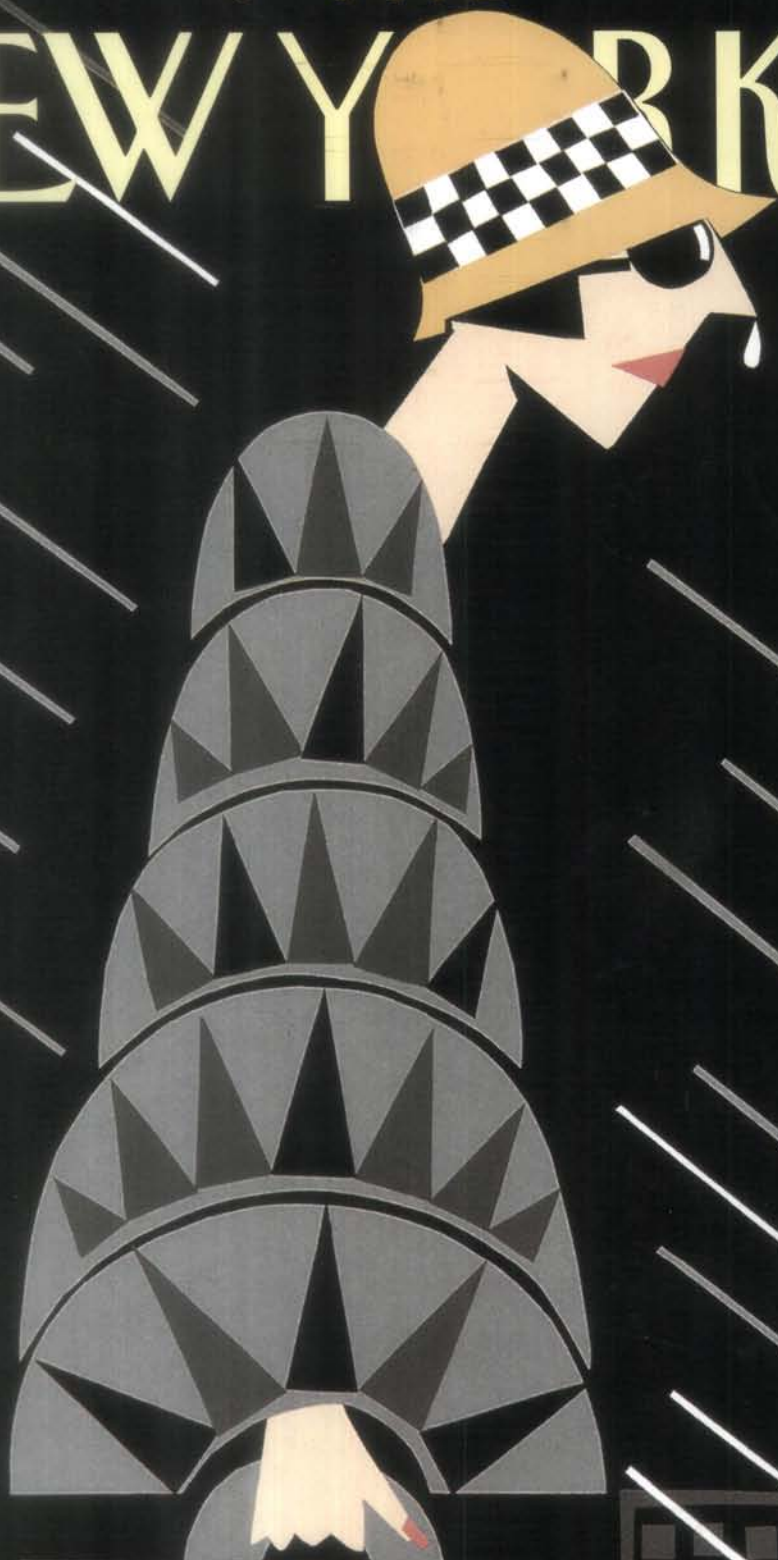


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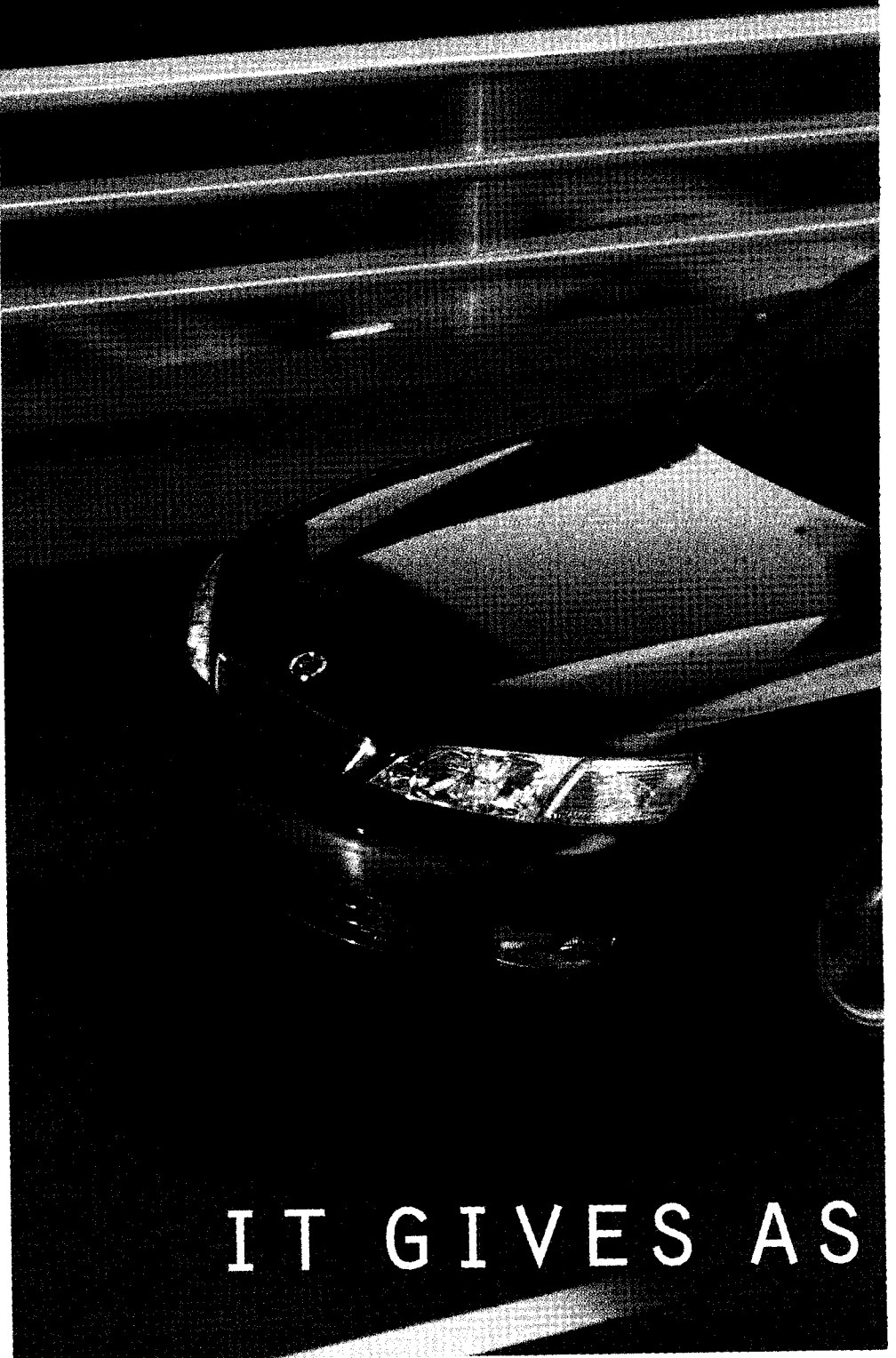
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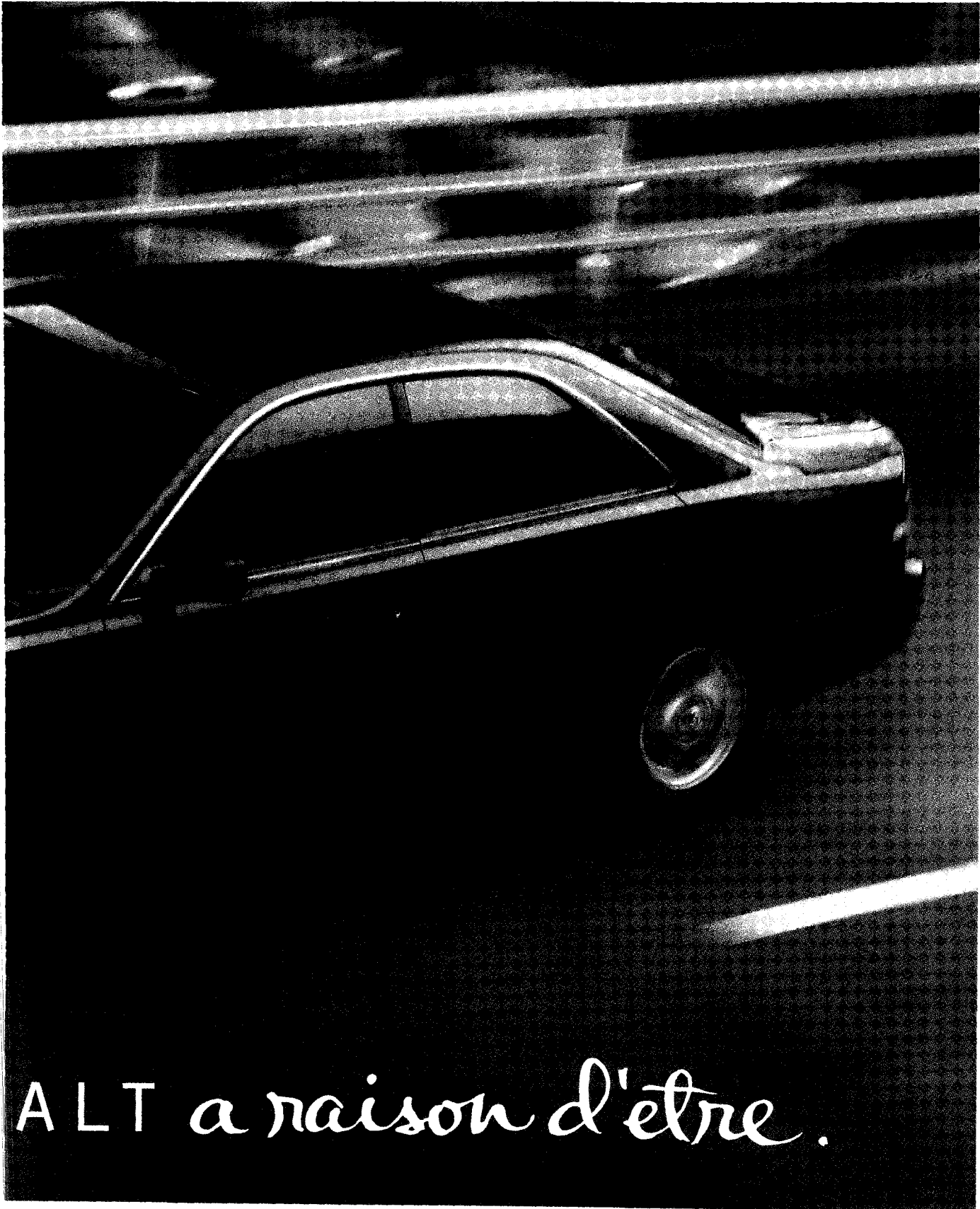
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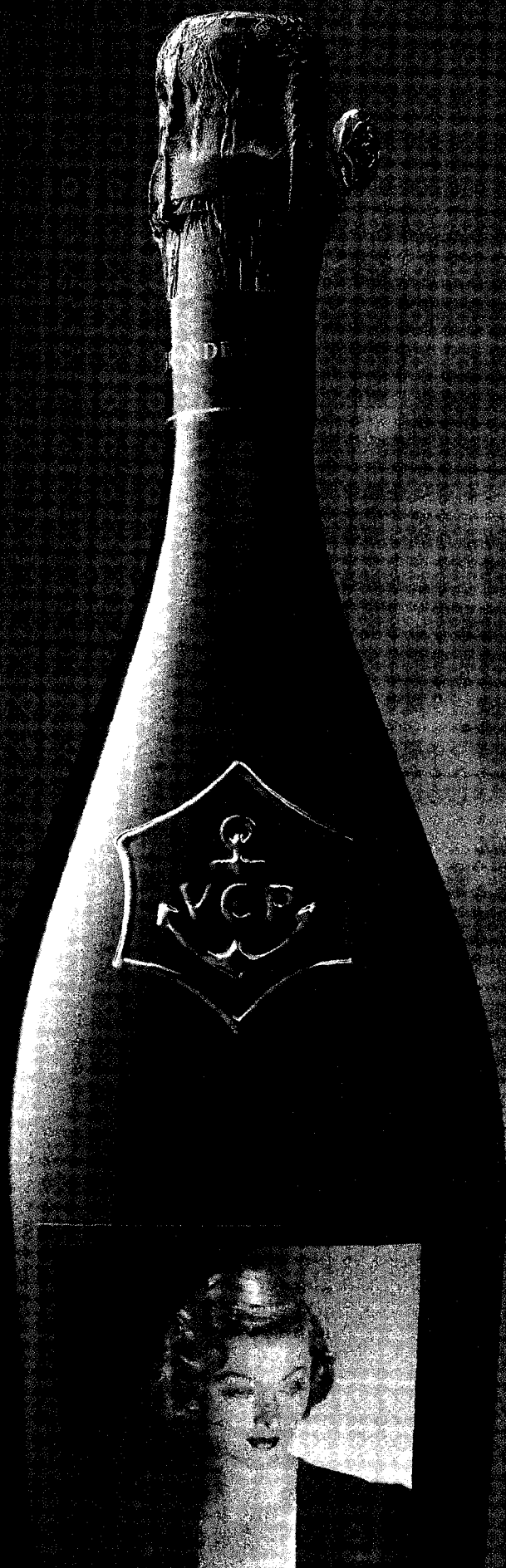
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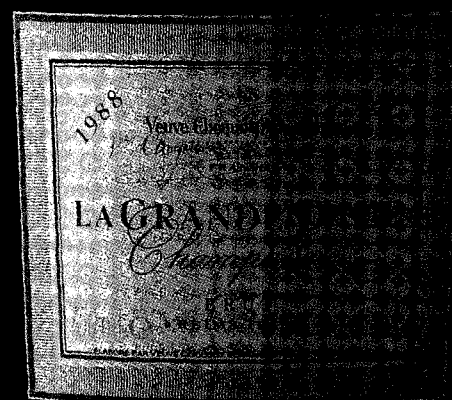
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SOLAR ECLIPSE

Behind Clinton's moon, the Republican sun still shines.

BARRING a sudden and violent Kansas tornado that would make Harry Truman's 1948 gale seem like a toddler blowing out birthday candles, President Clinton will be reelected handily next week, bringing with him Democratic additions to the House and the Senate. Political meteorologists will be tempted to conclude that the post-1968 Republican era, whose stormy climax was the 1994 congressional election, is over. To draw that conclusion, however, would be to mistake weather for climate.

Clinton's reelection will not change the fact that during the final third of the twentieth century the White House will have been won by only two Democrats, and that both were moderately conservative Southern Baptist ex-governors who based their careers on distancing themselves from their Northern, secular, liberal party. The real political lesson of 1996 may be that our era is one in which moderate Republicans beat conservative Republicans—quite as routinely as moderate Republicans (witness the elections of 1968, 1972, and 1988) have beaten liberal Democrats.

Deep beneath the surface of electoral swings, there has been a remarkable ex-

change of populations between the two national parties. The Republicans of 1996, in terms of region and ethnicity, if not of ideology, resemble the Democrats of 1932—an alliance of Southerners and Westerners with descendants of largely Catholic European immigrants in the Northeast. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has come to include constituencies that tended to be Republican before 1932—New Englanders, prairie progressives, and blacks.

The swap has not been an even one. After every census, the Northeast and Midwest lose congressional seats to the more Republican South and West. Conservatives have locked up the growing Protestant sects, leaving liberals with stagnant or declining mainline Protestant denominations. The two most faithful Democratic constituencies, blacks and Jews, are being overtaken by other minorities, with different interests. By 2010, Latinos, who vote Republican in increasing numbers, will outnumber blacks. Asian-Americans should be easier for the G.O.P. to attract, inasmuch as they tend to be affluent and to feel threatened more by racial quotas than by white racism.

On top of the demographic trends,

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"Well, if I'm going to hell I'd better get my butt in gear."

there are intangible elements, such as intellectual vigor, that are fast becoming Republican property. During this year's primaries, the touchiest public-policy issues of the day—abortion, immigration, trade, tax policy, gay rights—were thrashed out in full view by Republicans. Democrats calculated—correctly, it seems—that the Republicans' divisiveness would hurt their eventual nominee. In the long run, however, the Republican Party's donnybrooks will have helped to identify it as the party that tackles difficult issues.

Consider, for example, the issue of immigration. On the side of restricting immigration are Pete Wilson, California's Republican governor, and Pat Buchanan; on the side of welcoming it are Jack Kemp, William Bennett, and Steve Forbes. The Republicans haven't just monopolized one side of a major issue of the day; they have monopolized both sides. Similarly, the great debate about political economy during the primaries pitted Buchanan's national-populism against Forbes's libertarian-globalism, with Bob Dole in the middle. Where was the great debate among the Democrats?

In 1952, the political analyst Samuel Lubell argued that vigorous internal debate is a sign of a dominant majority party—what he called a sun party.

American politics "has been characterized not by two equally competing suns, but by a sun and a moon," Lubell wrote. "It is within the majority party that the issues of any particular period are fought out; while the minority party shines in reflected radiance of the heat thus generated." From 1801 to 1825, Thomas Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans were the sun: they held the Presidency and controlled both houses of Congress. From 1829 to 1861, the Democrats dominated overwhelmingly. From 1861 to 1933, it was the Republicans' turn. During the thirty-six years beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt's Inauguration in 1933, the Democrats controlled all three elected bodies for twenty-four years, while the Republicans did the same for only two.

The moon party occasionally elects a President, but it tends to be able to do so only when it nominates either a popular military hero—the Whigs' William Henry Harrison in 1840, the Republicans' Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952—or a me-too candidate, such as Grover Cleveland in 1884. Other than Woodrow Wilson, whose election in 1912 was the product of a Republican split, Cleveland was the only Democrat to win the Presidency between the Civil War and the New Deal. At a time when Democrats were identified with

bimetallism and insurgent labor, Cleveland reassured Republican business interests by being a "hard money" gold-only man and by sending federal troops to crush railroad strikers. Bill Clinton, similarly, has sided with business against labor on trade questions, collaborated with the G.O.P. to enact what Daniel Patrick Moynihan has called "welfare repeal," and announced that "the era of big government is over." Cleveland, it should be noted, served two terms without altering the Republican character of his time.

For the moment, the Republican sun is behind a cloud. If that sun is ever to reach its zenith, the Republican Party will have to learn to welcome—not just tolerate—moderate, and even liberal, defectors from the Democrats without imposing ideological litmus tests. Moderate Republican governors from the Northeast, like Christine Todd Whitman, William Weld, and George Pataki, and from the West, like Pete Wilson, demonstrate what such a Republican Party might look like. It's no accident that Wilson was a protégé of Richard Nixon, who was, after all, the last important moderate Republican President. Nixon's idea of a center-right Republican majority has been in partial eclipse ever since the advent of Ronald Reagan. (Reagan's personality, not his ideology, was the sun.) But a majority Republican Party would necessarily look more like a Nixon party than like a Reagan party. "Movement" conservatives—the kind who want to deregulate markets and reregulate private life—don't have the numbers to control American politics. They therefore have a choice. They can be an influential minority in a majority Republican Party or they can be the all-powerful majority in a minority Republican Party.

The big story of 1996, then, may be the tentative resurrection of moderate Republicanism—as a sentiment and a strategy, if not yet as an organization. Bob Dole's decision to run as a conservative rather than as a moderate may turn out to have been his greatest strategic error. "I can be Ronald Reagan, if that's what you want," Dole told conservatives early in the campaign. The man who wept at his mentor's funeral should have had a different slogan: Let Dole Be Nixon. —MICHAEL LIND

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THE PRICE OF IDEALISM

I can glean one message from Paul Berman's article "In Search of Ben Linder's Killers" (September 23rd): Have no ideals, have no dreams, don't follow your star. Otherwise, you'll be called a Goody Two-Shoes, your project may be described as "harebrained," and you may be likened to a murderer turned evangelical. What an injustice Berman does to our son Ben's memory and to that of the thousands of internationalists from the United States and from innumerable other countries—people who went to Nicaragua inspired by its revolution, some of whom also lost their lives to the Contras. And what a disservice Berman does to young people and future generations when he trivializes Ben's commitment.

How dare Berman compare Ben with the ex-Contra Williams, the man who considered it all right to kill Cubans? Does Berman consider the deliberate murder of teachers, nurses, ambulance drivers, and doctors and the destruction of electric plants and clinics patriotic acts? The Contras' goal was to destroy projects that would benefit the people at any price, including that of the lives of civilians. A band of Contras had attacked the El Cuá hydro plant the month before Ben and his colleagues were murdered, and some months later they destroyed the weir that had been finished after Ben's death. Don't tell me that those acts are comparable to what Ben and so many others were trying to do for the people of Nicaragua.

ELISABETH LINDER
Portland, Ore.

Hendrik Hertzberg's Comment ("Nicaragua's Second Act," September 23rd) states that the recent election is Nicaragua's second since its revolution, in 1979, ignoring the 1984 election, which the Sandinistas won. Of course, from the Reagan Administration's point of view

the 1984 election had to be a nonevent: otherwise the Sandinistas could not be characterized as Cuban-style dictators. But international observers gave that election high marks for fairness, by Latin-American standards. The Sandinistas won by a comfortable majority, while opposition candidates got more than thirty per cent of the vote—that, in itself, argues for the election's fairness. The fact is that the Sandinistas have always kept their word about elections, even when they have lost.

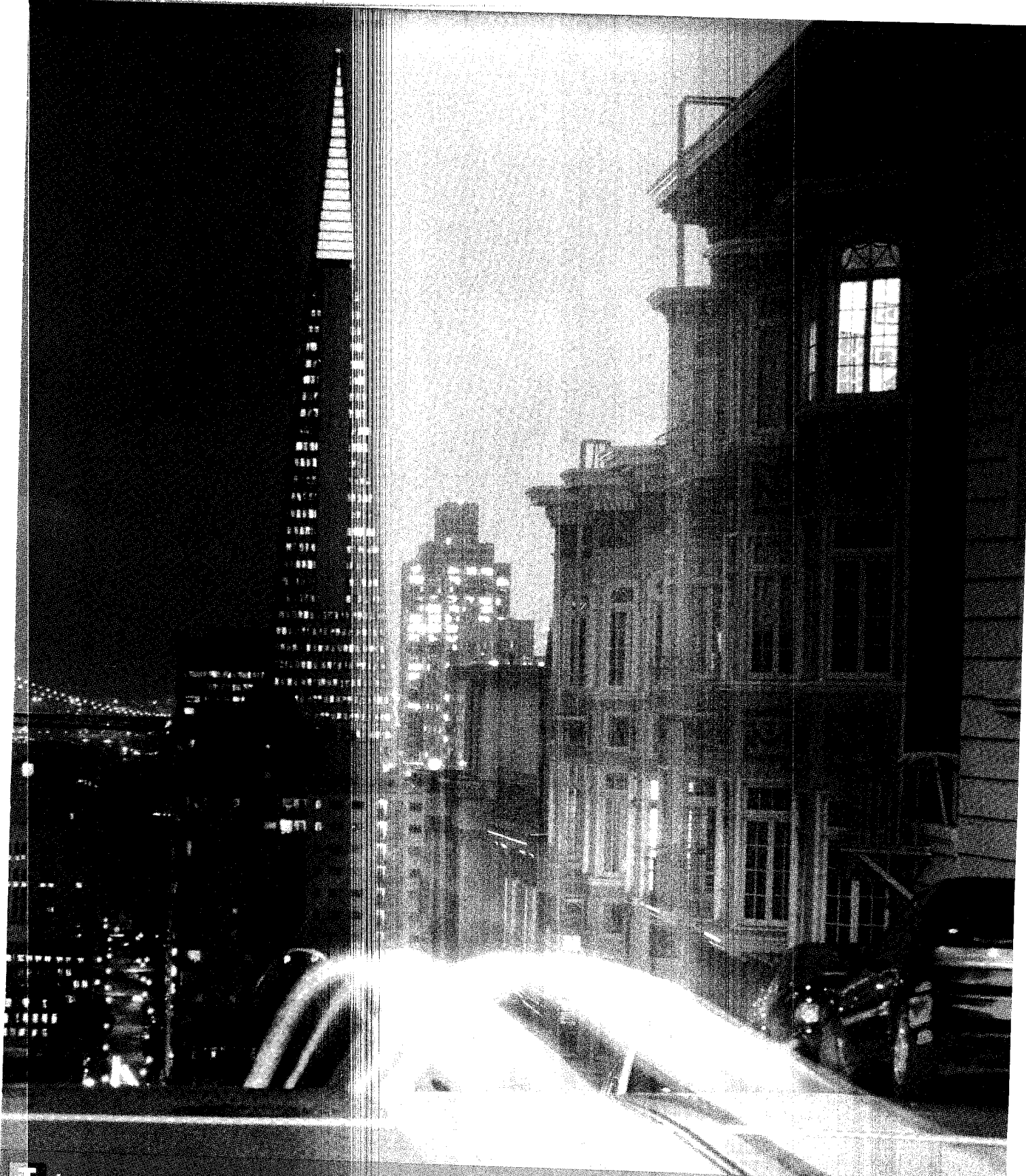
FATHER BILL TESKA
St. Paul's Church on the Hill
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As a Nicaraguan-born American citizen and a longtime anti-Somoza critic, I was dismayed by the American media's naïve swallowing of the myth that the Sandinistas were the saviors of Nicaragua. Everyone in Nicaragua knows that the Sandinistas stole the 1979 revolution from a national anti-Somoza coalition, of which they were merely one cog. Paul Berman is to be commended for his grasp of the subtleties behind the ongoing agony of the Nicaraguan people, whose tragedy is to have got caught up in an alien Cold War that is now history but has destroyed their country.

MARC RANGEL
New York City

Mr. Berman is incorrect when he states that there is some reason to doubt that our son Ben was killed by a gunshot at close range. I interviewed Dr. Balladares, the autopsy surgeon, and found him credible when he described the bullet-entry wound as resulting from a gunshot at very close range.

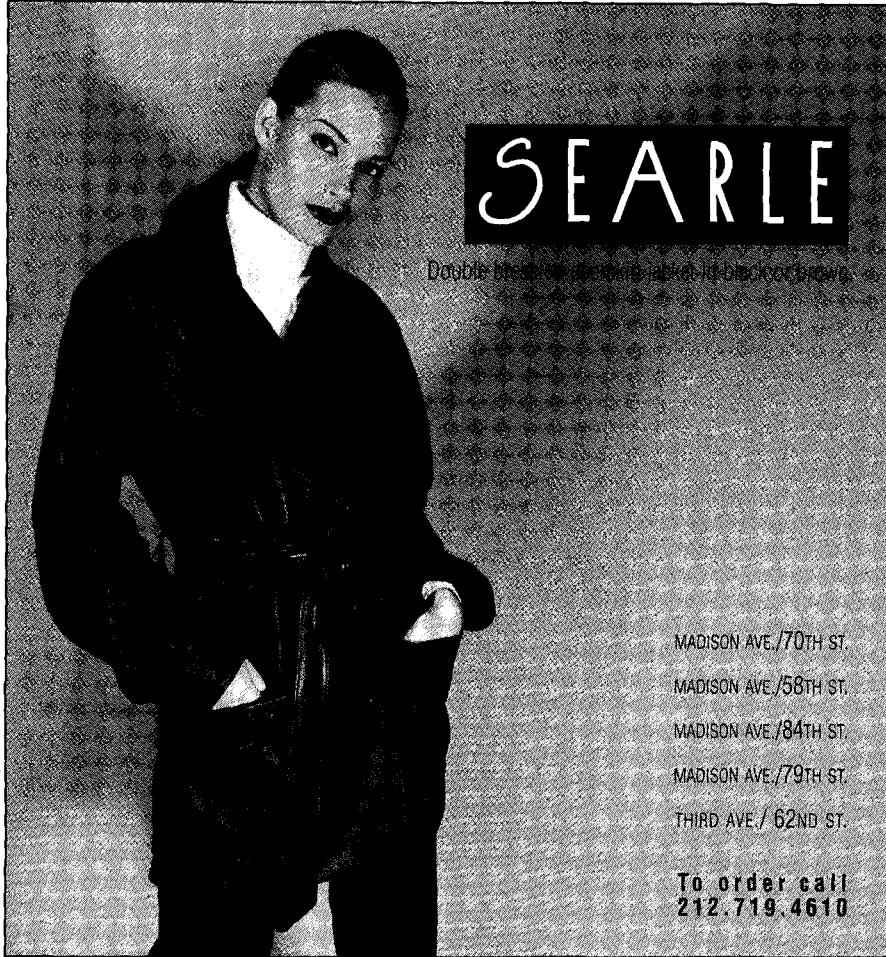
The autopsy report and related evidence were submitted to a number of highly respected forensic pathologists. One of them, Dr. Michael Baden, told our lawyers that he could "testify in court



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that there is medical certainty that Ben Linder was killed by a weapon fired at point-blank range." The United States Department of State asked another respected pathologist to review the evidence and reported his conclusion: "The subject autopsy report did adequately determine the cause of death and did not leave any basis for ambiguity." A third doctor also concurred.

Dr. Vincent Di Maio was the doctor who was highly critical of the report; he considered the photograph too blurry and so could not say how close the gun that killed Ben was to his head. Although Dr. Di Maio's report is the longest of the pathologists' reports, that doesn't mean that it is the most thorough, which is how Berman describes it. Verbosity has little to do with accuracy.

Does Berman find it hard to believe that the Contras would do such a thing as shoot Ben at point-blank range? How does he account for the death of Pablo Rosales—one of the two Nicaraguans killed with Ben—who received multiple wounds and was then fatally stabbed? It seems likely that Berman raises the question of doubt as a lame excuse to rewrite history.

DAVID LINDER, M.D.
Professor of Pathology Emeritus
Oregon Health Sciences University
Portland, Ore.

Paul Berman replies:

Williams's account of Ben Linder's death, which I reported, contradicts both the State Department version and Dr. Linder's. But Williams's account has the merit of being vivid with precise visual details—and of being consistent with what still seems to me easily the most rigorous of the forensic reports, that of Dr. Di Maio.

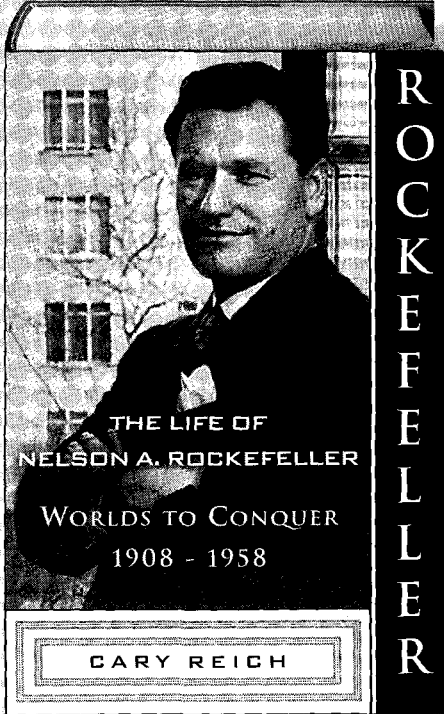
In Nicaragua today, several prominent Sandinistas have acknowledged the authoritarianism of their own government during the nineteen-eighties, and many Sandinistas and former Contras have come to understand that good and honorable people fought on both sides of their country's civil war. That is why, in the region where he worked and died, Ben Linder's selfless humanitarianism is justly celebrated—even by former Contras.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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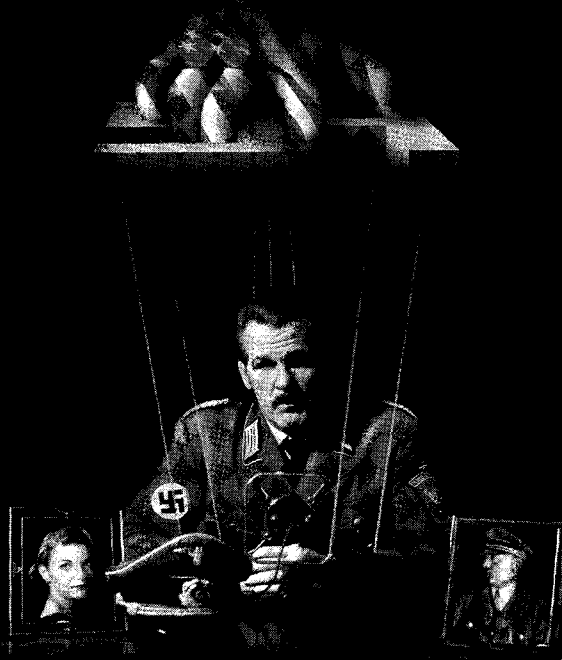
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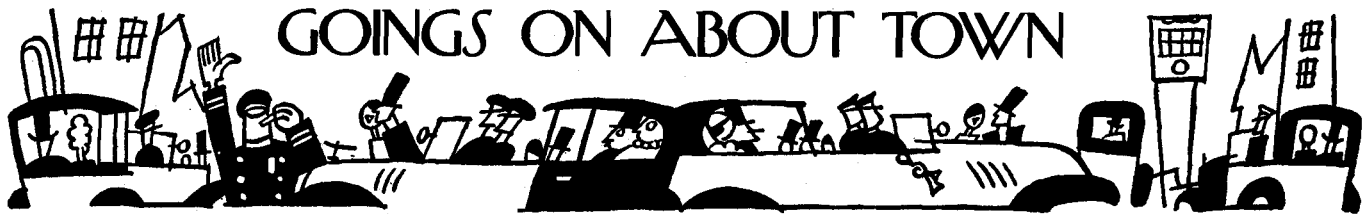
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CAKEWALK—Linda Lavin has the lead opposite Michael Knight in Peter Feibleman's autobiographical drama about his relationship with Lillian Hellman. Directed by Marshall Mason, with music by Carly Simon. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO—John Kander and Fred Ebb's 1975 musical version of Maureen Dallas Watkins's 1926 play, starring Bebe Neuwirth, Ann Reinking, Joel Grey, and James Naughton. Directed by Walter Bobbie. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

DEMONOLOGY—Marisa Tomei and Rocco Sisto star in Kelly Stuart's new comedy, set in the future, about sabotage at a baby-formula company. Directed by Jim Simpson. Previews begin Oct. 30. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

FAMILY VALUES—A podiatrist (Joel Fabiani) has second thoughts after he dumps his wife (Ellen Evans) for a younger woman, in a comedy by the Canadian playwright Carl Ritchie. Previews begin Nov. 1. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 358-5174.)

Go Go Go—Juliana Francis performs a multimedia one-woman show about the relationship between sexual abuse and the sex industry. In previews through Nov. 2. Opens Nov. 3 at 7:30. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

GOLDEN CHILD—The latest from the pen of David Henry Wang, a drama set in China in the nineteen-twenties. Directed by James Lapine. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

THE GRAVITY OF MEANS—A new comedy by John Kolvenbach, on the subject of friendship. In previews through Nov. 2. Opens Nov. 3 at 7. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

IT'S A SLIPPERY SLOPE—Spalding Gray has learned to ski, and he tells all about it in his new monologue, on Sundays and Mondays at the Vivian Beaumont. Previews begin Nov. 3. (Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE NEW BOZENA—The latest clownings around by the red-nosed trio composed of David Costabile, Michael Dahlen, and Kevin Isola. In pre-

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views through Oct. 30. Opens Oct. 31 at 7. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

NINE ARMENIANS—Leslie Ayzvazian's new work, a multigenerational family drama, was inspired by memories of her immigrant-scholar grandfather. With Kathleen Chalfant, Michael Countryman, and Sophie Hayden. Directed by Lynne Meadow. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

PRESENT LAUGHTER—Frank Langella portrays the matinee idol Garry Essendine in Noël Coward's 1946 comedy. Directed by Scott Elliot. In previews. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE QUEEN OF BINGO—A new comedy by Jeanne Michels and Phyllis Murphy, about a Friday night in the life of two middle-aged sisters who are inveterate low-stakes gamblers. Previews begin Nov. 1. (Greenwich House Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

THE RED DEVIL BATTERY SIGN—Elizabeth Ashley and James Victor star in Tennessee Williams's 1975 drama, set in Dallas after the assassination of President Kennedy. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

THE REHEARSAL—The Roundabout Theatre Company presents Roger Rees and David Threlfall in Jeremy Sams's new translation of Jean Anouilh's 1963 drama. Directed by Nicholas Martin. Previews begin Oct. 31. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

ROMEO AND JULIET—A staging by England's Haworth Shakespeare Festival, set in present-day Zululand. Directed by Simon Stokes. One performance only, on Nov. 3 at 5:30. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-6900.)

THE SANTALAND DIARIES—Two one-acts, adapted by Joe Mantello from David Sedaris's book of stories, "Barrel Fever." Starring Karen Valentine and Timothy Olyphant, with costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. Directed by Mr. Mantello. Previews begin Nov. 1. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

SIGNATURE THEATRE COMPANY—The troupe's Sam Shepard season begins with a pair of one-acts: "When the World Was Green (A Chef's Fable)," co-written with Joseph Chaikin, and "Chicago." Mr. Chaikin is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

THIS IS OUR YOUTH—A new play from the New

Group, in which a nineteen-year-old Upper West Sider steals fifteen thousand dollars from his father, then holes up for the night with a friend. Written by Kenneth Lonergan. Opens Oct. 30 at 8. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THE WAITING ROOM—Lisa Loomer's surrealist comedy, which stars Veanne Cox, Michele Shay, Chloe Webb, and June Kyoko Lu, is set in a doctor's office and examines the ravages of beauty trends through the ages, from bound feet to breast implants. In previews through Nov. 4. Opens Nov. 5 at 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AMERICANA—A revue surveying the evolution of the nation's music since the eighteen-nineties. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

BORN TO SING!—This sequel to the long-running gospel musical "Mama, I Want to Sing!" has a negligible plot and some second-rate acting, but the point is the music, and the music is glorious. You couldn't find a better introduction to gospel without going to church. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

CHIMÈRE—The French company Zingaro—seventeen riders, acrobats, and dancers, a twelve-member band, and twenty-seven horses—overwhelms its audience with passionate, sensual images. This is art for art's sake, without any particular plot, but the equestrianism is astonishing (a horse at full gallop, for instance, with a rider balanced upside down near one shoulder), and in combination with the richly colored, Indian-inspired music, dance, and costumes, it's exquisite. (The big top at Battery Park City. For more information, call 718-636-4100. Closes Nov. 10.)

THE COCOANUTS—The American Jewish Theatre's revival of the Irving Berlin—George S. Kaufman musical that starred the Marx Brothers in 1925. The songs are pleasant enough, but it's the laugh-out-loud comedy that really scores. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

CYMBELINE—The Pearl Theatre Company's staging of Shakespeare's late play. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

EINSTEIN: A STAGE PORTRAIT—John Crowther portrays the fluffy-haired physicist, in a new play by Willard Simms. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-6322. Closes Nov. 10.)

FIT TO BE TIED—A new comedy by Nicky Silver, starring T. Scott Cunningham, Jean Smart, Matt Keeslar, and Dick Latessa. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 10.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!—Gerard Alessandrini cuts a satirical swath through the Great White Way in a new edition of his musical parody. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

431 OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS—Miriam Kouzel Billington portrays a beleaguered pregnant woman planning an ill-fated bris and David Presby plays every other character, in a comedy the two co-wrote with Peter Goldman. It's amateurish and cliché-ridden, but Mr. Presby is funny and fetching as the party planner Eden Esterhaus, who has the perfect pageboy and a great set of legs to go with it. A Jewish Repertory Theatre production. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Nov. 17.)

FULL GALLOP—The legendary, vividly eccentric fashion editor Diana Vreeland is the subject of Mary Louise Wilson and Mark Hampton's one-woman play, in which Wilson stars. Set in 1971, shortly after Vreeland was fired from *Vogue*, it's rich and resonant, with much to say about life that's worth hearing. A thoroughly satisfying evening in the theatre—very funny and very moving. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)



Matt Keeslar, Jean Smart, and T. Scott Cunningham, in "Fit to Be Tied."

CATS

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Les Misérables



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GRACE & GLORIE—Tom Ziegler's predictable but charmingly told tale of an illiterate Virginia mountain woman, played by Estelle Parsons, and the Harvard M.B.A. who befriends her in her last days. Under Gloria Muzio's direction, Parsons makes the blend of humor and pathos affecting rather than—as it might easily have been—cloying. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

THE HEATHER WOODBURY REPORT; OR, WHAT EVER—The performance artist presents one episode of her one-woman, hundred-odd-character serial comedy every Wednesday through Dec. 18. (Surf Reality, 172 Allen St., between Stanton and Rivington Sts. 673-4182.)

HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY—The exuberant designer Howard Crabtree died in June, and this revue of witty, satiric songs (created with and written and directed by Mark Waldrop, and sung by a talented cast dressed in Crabtree's sequined, feathered, mind-boggling costumes) is a fitting cap to his career. The songs purport to be parts of a larger show that keeps falling apart, leaving Howard (played by Michael West) wondering whether he should have become a chicken farmer. Clearly, chicken farming's loss was our gain. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

HUGHIE—Al Pacino stars as the blowhard gambler Eric Smith, in his own staging of Eugene O'Neill's 1941 drama. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 2.)

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE—In made-for-musical-theatre voices, the appealing cast of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts's crowd-pleasing revue about love and marriage sings songs examining made-for-musical-theatre issues. Couples in the audience may nudge each other happily as they guess the actors' lines before they're uttered. Directed by Joel Bishoff. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST—Melissa Errico, Nancy Marchand, and Eric Stoltz lead the cast in the Irish Repertory Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's 1895 comedy. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

THE INNOCENCE OF GHOSTS—Spirits lead a woman to a Chinese acupuncture clinic, in a drama by Rosanna Staffa. Presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Nov. 9.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author" runs in rotating repertory with Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE—August Wilson's 1986 drama, about the descendants of former slaves, gets a New Federal Theatre staging, directed by Clinton Turner Davis. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 353-1176. Closes Nov. 17.)

JOSEPH GABRIEL: MAGIC ON BROADWAY—The sleight-of-hand artist and illusionist, Off Broadway, actually. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

LATE NITE CATECHISM—As Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan point out in their program notes, many of the stories in their satire of Catholic-school education come from their own memories—another instance of truth's being not only stranger than fiction but funnier, too. Donovan, whose face seems to hold as many expressions as the Bible has parables, offers a commanding performance as the lone nun in charge of an adult catechism class, and the audience brings as much to the performance as the script does. It's hard to keep from laughing whether you're a believer or not, though you

may face a reprimand or two in the process. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

THE MAIDEN OF LUDMIR—The Folksbiene Playhouse presents a new Yiddish musical by Miriam Hoffman (book and lyrics) and John Clifton (music), based on the life of the nineteenth-century female Torah scholar. With Zypora Spaisman, Mina Bern, and Bernard Mendelovitch. (Simultaneous English or Russian translation is available.) (123 E. 55th St. 755-2231.)



Marcus and Paul Giamatti, in "The Blues Are Running."

MATTY: AN EVENING WITH CHRISTY MATHEWSON—Between 1911 and 1913, baseball great Christy Mathewson led the New York Giants to three pennant victories, becoming something like the Michael Jordan of his day. He also did quite a bit of writing, which Eddie Frierson has turned into a one-man show. Frierson exhibits plenty of energy (there's no shortage of yelling) in relating tales of such characters as manager John McGraw and Charley (Giant Jinx Killer) Faust. Unfortunately, he never fails to include the moral of a story. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

MISSING/KISSING—A double bill of new comedies written and directed by John Patrick Shanley: "Missing Marisa," about two men who've been jilted by the same woman, and "Kissing Christine," about a first date. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

OLD WICKED SONGS—Jon Marans' well-written piece of sentimental sanctimony asks the question: Can a blocked, arrogant twenty-five-year-old pianist find wisdom under the tutelage of a suicidal singing teacher who survived the Holocaust? (The answer is yes.) The characters go through their changes neatly, but the audience arrives at the station long before the engine of the plot does. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/16/96.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

POLITICAL ANIMAL—Douglas McGrath portrays a charming but unprincipled Presidential candidate in his new comedy. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 10.)

RADIO GALS—A congenial tribute to the all-girl bands of the twenties and to the excitement that the new technology of broadcasting generated. Carole Cook plays Hazel C. Hunt, a small-town Arkansas music teacher who starts a radio station in her living room, with a sort of shrewd, enthusiastic dotiness. Hazel surrounds herself with a versatile group of female singers and musicians (two of whom, for no apparent reason, are played by men); then an inspector from the Commerce Department arrives to take away their license. Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's substance-free musical is so good-natured that the outcome is never really in doubt, but the songs—a combination of novelty, Tin Pan Alley-style, and jagged "modernist" numbers—are mostly wonderful and often very funny, too. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

RECREATION—In Penn Jillette's new play, set in a Memphis strip club, a Mitty-like man lets his mind wander, and noisier comedy ensues. (Currican, 154 W. 29th St. 736-2533. Closes Nov. 17.)

SEX AND LONGING—In Christopher Durang's new comedy, Sigourney Weaver and Jay Goede play sexually addicted friends whose life styles come under attack by right-wingers. A Lincoln Center Theatre production, directed by Garland Wright. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 17.)

SKYLIGHT—The playwright David Hare's success and his social conscience are still at odds.

This time, the inimitable Michael Gambon plays a successful entrepreneur, and the powerful, appealing Lia Williams is his beloved former mistress, who has given up the lush life to teach the underprivileged. Their differences are factored out as systematically as an algebraic equation. Like John Guter's set—a well-appointed ramshackle flat in the fashionable but dowdy area of Northwest London—the play seems caught between naturalism and symbolism. (9/30/96) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

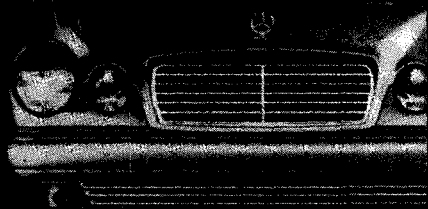
TAKING SIDES—Ronald Harwood's drama stars Ed Harris as an American military investigator and Daniel Massey as the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, who was accused of collaborating with the Nazis. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES**: Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK**: Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS**: Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **COWGIRLS**: Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS**: Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM**: St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL**: SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!**: Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN IDEAL HUSBAND**: Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I**: Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR**: Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS**: Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES**: Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON**: Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME**: Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**: Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT**: Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAYEMAN**: Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT**: Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFE**: Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP**: Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD**: Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING**: St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA**: Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

"SPECTRAL HOEDOWN"—Four of New York's most talented lighting designers—Roma Flowers, David Fritz, Carol Mullins, and Philip Sandström—turn the tables on a cast of twelve dancers and musicians in a sort of high-art hootenanny: imagine a square dance in which the lighting designers get to be the callers. Twice each evening, a pair of them will sit down at separate computers to create a changing stage environment for the dancers and



You've always heard owning a Mercedes made a statement. (Even though you bought the car entirely for the engineering, of course.) Well, now you can make another one. With these handsome leather designs made exclusively for Mercedes-Benz by Bally of Switzerland. What kind of statement could this make? My other Mercedes is a handbag, comes to mind. Hmmm. Sounds like there's an idea for a bumper sticker in there somewhere.



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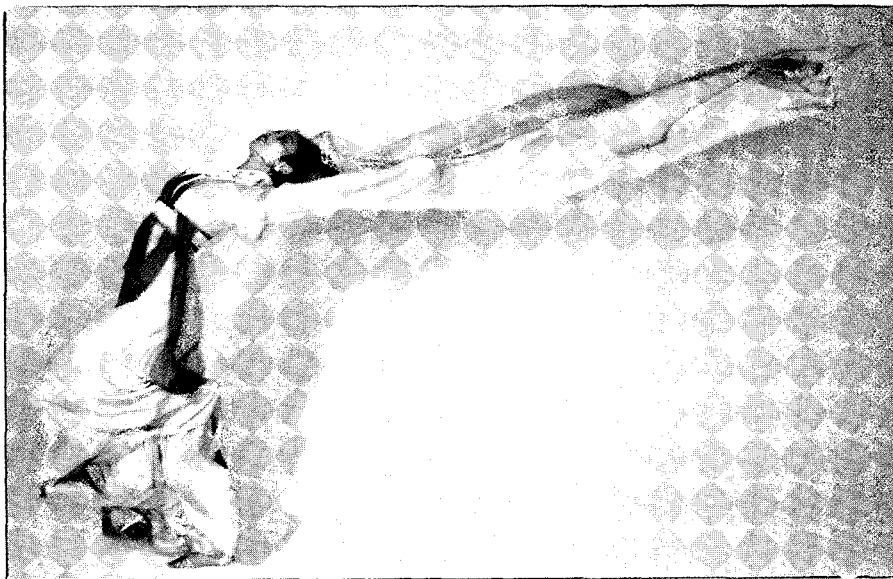
MY OTHER MERCEDES
IS A HANDBAG

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musicians to respond to—a process that Mullins, the doyenne of the Danspace light board, has called “seeing thought made palpable.” Sandström, who usually reigns from the lighting booth at Dance Theatre Workshop, says, “I’ve always wanted to take three months to set light cues and then call the choreographer in on tech day and say, ‘Here’s the first light cue, now make a piece.’” Both dancers and lighting designers will be winging it, but don’t worry about an endless improv. Sandström asserts, “We won’t be afraid to shake things up or to pull the plug.” (Danspace Project, St. Mark’s In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 1-3 at 8:30.)

"SILK RIVER"—Last spring, the members of the Zhongmei Dance Company offered their disciplined versions of classical Chinese court dances; they return with interpretations of the country's folk dances. According to Zhongmei Li, the founder and principal choreographer, the two programs reflect the regimen of the Beijing Dance Academy, where many of the dancers trained; students there supplement classroom study of classical dance forms with trips to the provinces to absorb local folk styles. One of the dances, “The Mother River,” came out of Ms. Li’s trip to Shanxi Province, where the people held bright ribbons as they danced in New Year’s parades. In her version, the colored ribbons have become long white sleeves, floating in the play of the pale stage lights. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 29 at 7, Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at 8, Nov. 2 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 3 at 2 and 7:30.)

"FOREVER HOLD YOUR PIECE"—Djola Branner, the former Pomo Afro Homo, and Patrick Scully, who describes himself as a radical faerie, contemplate interracial same-sex marriage: in between the rehearsal dinner and the wedding ceremony, the two dancers recall their separate pasts. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 31-Nov. 2 at 8 and Nov. 3 at 3.)



Zhongmei Li, in “Silk River,” at the Joyce.

"ORFEO"—For the first engagement in its residence at the Alliance Française, the Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre presents a full-length work that transposes the myth of Orpheus to Prohibition-era Kansas City. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 31-Nov. 2 at 8.)

"ARTURELLA"—The former Bill T. Jones dancer Arthur Aviles premieres an “autobiographical fantasy” about a Nuyorican teen-age boy who gets an invitation to attend a *quinceañera*, not for a fifteen-year-old girl but for a handsome prince. (Hostos Center for the Arts, 450 Grand Concourse, at 149th St., the Bronx. 718-518-4455. Nov. 1-2 at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

BLACK CROWES—For a while they were a younger, feistier version of the Rolling Stones, but these days the Stones impersonate the Stones better than the Black Crowes do. Still, Chris Robinson’s gnarled tenor and the band’s razor-sharp rhythm section are forces to be reckoned with. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 30-31 at 8.)

GEORGE CLINTON—His Parliament-Funkadelic army fused metal guitars, sci-fi silliness—who can forget the spaceship they dragged onstage?—and the heaviest of heavy funk rhythms on its mission to “rescue dance music from the blahs.” Today, Clinton is something of an institution, invoked by rockers like Primus and the Red Hot Chili Peppers and sampled extensively by rappers (most notably, Dr. Dre). His last album, “Hey, Man... Smell My Finger,” was critically acclaimed but barely grazed the charts; maybe that’s because, like the Grateful Dead, he’s at his best in his lengthy, free-form live shows. A very happy Halloween. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-1771. Oct. 30-31 at 8.)

DIAMANDA GALÁS—For those who don’t belong to the cult of Galás, her bilingual ululation suggests a woman possessed alternately by the spirits of Tina Turner, Yoko Ono, and a Greek dominatrix. Recently, she teamed up with John Paul Jones, the former Led Zeppelin bassist, to record “The Sporting Life,” a jazz-and-blues-flavored album that was abrasively fascinating. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 31 at 9.)

BELA FLECK AND THE FLECKTONES—The first performer to parlay banjo virtuosity and *matinée*-idol looks into a successful recording career, Fleck is the Roy Clark of the nineties. His Flecktones have a tendency to tiptoe perilously close to jazz-fusion territory, but for the most part they offer

have the stature of *qawwali* master Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, but the group’s melismatic harmonies are equally hypnotic. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 2 at 8.)

INTI-ILIMANI—Using two dozen different string, wind, and percussion instruments, these seven Chilean practitioners of *nueva canción* play with the verve of the Gipsy Kings and the suavity of romantic balladeers. After Allende’s assassination, they lived abroad for fifteen years; exile and the influence of late-sixties folk resulted in a hybrid of folkie New Age tunes, traditional ballads, percussion solos, instrumentals with panpipes, and layered choral numbers. (Town Hall. Nov. 2 at 8.)

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR.—The jazz and lite-pop saxophonist. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 2 at 8.)

WESLIA WHITFIELD—A West Coast sensation, vocalist Whitfield has the poise, the diction, and the taste of a budding Mabel Mercer. Her program ranges over the standards, which she imbues with delicate swing and knowing wit. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 3 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 3: The **JAMES CARTER** quartet and the **NNENNA FREELON** trio. The tenor-saxophone wars are still in full swing, but with Joshua Redmanfunking it up these days it looks like the more conservative Carter is gaining ground. He calls on the entire history of his horn, but he’s far from a starchy archivist: when his myriad muses collide and the harmonic torrents of forties-era Don Byas meet the tonal effusions of eighties-era David Murray, watch out. Freelon is a dedicated vocalist committed to the jazz aesthetic. Starting Nov. 5: The **JOE HENDERSON** big band. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through New Year’s Eve, the great **BOBBY SHORT**. Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of Short’s ivory-tinkling, nor has it taken the edge off his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. A fixture at the Carlyle, he can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the sophistication, humor, and pathos it deserves. Also well served are gems by Duke Ellington, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 3: The **HANK CRAWFORD** and **JIMMY MC GRIFF** quartet. Organist McGriff and altoist Crawford mix R. & B. grease with jazz smarts. Vocalist **DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER** takes over on Nov. 5. She may call France home, but the American-born singer is fondly remembered for her seventies stint with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band and her subsequent Broadway turn in “The Wiz.” Dining.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Vocalist **MAUREEN MC GOVERN** is the star-in-residence. . . .

¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there’s a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Nov. 1-2: The **TED DUNBAR** trio. Dunbar was a ubiquitous figure in the seventies, but his appearances in New York have been at best fleeting ever since. As a guitarist, he keeps the spirits of Wes Montgomery

MARC ROYCE



Twenty five years ago,
I never would have believed this.
I am successful.
I have more than what I wanted.
I'm responsible for a department,
a sales goal, twelve careers,
a home, a spouse, two kids,
one grandchild,
and a car overdue for service.
Of course I'll
find time to think
about my investments.
As soon as I find time to think.

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and Grant Green alive, and, as his stint with Gil Evans proved, he's got a brazen streak, too. **SWEET BASIL**, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Nov. 3: The **DAVID SANCHEZ** quintet. Tenorist Sanchez tempers his Sonny Rollins fixation with a feel for Latin rhythms; for this passionate young talent, the claves carry as much weight as the cadences of hard bop. **ROY HAYNES** gets the call on Nov. 5. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—After more than a quarter of a century of refined improvising, guitarist **ATTILLA ZOLLER** (Oct. 30) still hasn't escaped the musician's-musician trap. Still, his well of inspiration seems to replenish itself regularly. "Thingin'," a radiant trio session with Lee Konitz and Don Friedman, is shaping up to be the sleeper jazz album of 1996. Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Nov. 2: The trio of saxophonist **BOB KINDRED**, pianist **TED ROSENTHAL**, and bassist **STEVE LASPINA** is a meeting of like-minded swingers, at home with both serene lyricism and pungent improvisation. Dining.

ROCK, ETC.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 30: **JUNIOR BROWN**. An Indiana cowboy with a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools, Brown is something of a country-and-Western throwback, a basso-profundo crooner with a salty, poker-faced delivery. He has a sense of humor, too: his guitar-propelled material is populated with state troopers and hula girls. But his fearsome-looking "guit steel"—a cross between a Fender Bullet and an old lap steel guitar—is what has made his reputation. He's probably the only guitarist who can switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 2: Rock legend and sometime Bruce Springsteen associate **GARRY U.S. BONDS**.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 30: A rare club appearance by **JOHN MELLENCAMP**. For some, he is the Jeff Bridges of rock: instantly recognizable, consistently solid, often inspired, but too much the regular guy to be hip. Like Bridges, this singer-songwriter lets his work speak for itself, and the modest radiance of his heartland rock is now being emulated by a horde of bands that grew up on songs like "Jack and Diane" and "Pink Houses." But his brilliant new album, "Mr. Happy Go Lucky," leaves that part of his career behind: with a nod to trip-hop and a little help from the dance-floor-savvy d.j. Junior Vasquez, he's turned in a lean and original work.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A post-modern Halloween with **BLONDE REDHEAD** and **JONATHAN FIRE-EATER**. With its fractured English and little-boy-lost-in-a-watch-factory sound, Blonde Redhead seems to have taken a detour through Ionesco on the way to the fuzz box. The New York-based quartet (two Japanese women and twin Italian brothers) has overcome the language barrier—and a heavy debt to Sonic Youth's "Daydream Nation"—to become darlings of the local scene. Its latest release, "La Mia Vita Violenta," on the ultra-hip Smells Like Records, is filled with marvels like "(I Am Taking Out My Eurotrash) I Still Get My Rocks Off," proving that a solid grasp of English is no requirement for rock-and-roll brilliance. / Looking (and sounding) like a nineties version of sixties-era Who, the unapologetically modish band Jonathan Fire-Eater may well turn out to be America's answer to the new British Invasion. But if the East Village group shares an affinity for snazzy getups with such British groups as Pulp and Oasis, it also claims a distinctly American link to the darker regions of rock.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Oct. 31: Scary ska with **MEPHISKAPHELES**.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A survey of a hundred and fifty canvases by the master landscape painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. Through Jan. 19. (For more Corot, see the Brooklyn Museum.) ...

¶ "Queen Nefertiti and the Royal Women" presents narrative reliefs and sculptures from Egypt's Amarna period (1353-1336 B.C.). A complementary reinstallation of sculptures, reliefs, and other objects is on view in the Amarna Galleries. Through Feb. 2. ... ¶ "Eugène Cuvelier, Photographer in the Circle of Corot," an exhibit of salted-paper prints from the eighteen-fifties and -sixties: streets and farmyards in the town of Barbizon, and exquisite, atmospheric views of the nearby Fontainebleau Forest. Through Jan. 12. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—The Jasper Johns retrospective features two hundred and twenty-five works—paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures—and naturally includes a few flags, targets, numerals, and cross-hatch patterns. Through Jan. 21. (A show of Johns's print work since 1960 is at Castelli, 578 Broadway, through Dec. 14.) ... ¶ "Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper," the first exhibition in this country of drawings by the actor, dramatic theorist, and poet.

Through Jan. 7. ... ¶ Multimedia conceptual work by the Dutch artist Pieter Laurens Mol. Through Nov. 2. (He also has a show at Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St., through Nov. 9.) (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Ellsworth Kelly," a large survey of the artist's paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and photographs. Through Jan. 19. (For more Kelly, see "Masterworks" uptown and his solo show in Chelsea.) (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St.—"Max Beckmann in Exile," a display of twenty-four paintings, including several large triptychs, by the German Expressionist who left his homeland in 1937, after he had been declared (along with many others) a "degenerate artist." Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"I'll Be Your Mirror," a retrospective of Nan Goldin's disturbing photographs of the gritty, glamorous downtown life. Through Jan. 5. (A concurrent show of Goldin's pictures of children is at Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St., through Dec. 21.) ... ¶ "Views from Abroad: European Perspectives on American Art 2" draws from the collections of the Whitney and the Museum für Moderne Kunst, in Frankfurt.

Among the artists represented are Stephan Balkenhol, Lawrence Weiner, Jenny Holzer, Charles Ray, and Robert Gober. Through Jan. 5. ... ¶ "Breuer's Whitney" includes drawings, photographs, models, and other objects chosen to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of Marcel Breuer's gray granite upside-down ziggurat. Through Dec. 8. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibit of the Codex Leicester, Leonardo's manuscript on such scientific subjects as hydrodynamics and astronomy. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"In the Light of Italy: Corot and Early Open-Air Painting," an exquisite exhibition of oil sketches which makes a marvellous pendant to the big Corot show at the Met. Long before the advent of Impressionism, plein-air painting was an arena for experimentation. The often very small pictures in this show, all from the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries, were produced by an international cadre of artists drawn to the antiquities and landscape of Rome and its environs. Among the many highlights are the British painter Thomas Jones's "Wall in Naples" (1782), astonishing for its clarity and economy (its subtle play of rectilinear shapes suggests high modernist painting), and the German Carl Blechen's remarkably abstract studies (the 1820 "Cloud Strokes" seems to consist of no more than a few horizontal swipes of the brush). Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ "Photography in Latin America: A Spiritual Journey," a selection of more than a hundred pictures from the museum's collection. Among the forty-two artists represented (most of whom are women) are Manuel and Lola Alvarez Bravo, Graciela Iturbide, Bastienne Schmidt, and Javier Silva Meinel. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Drawings by Glenn Ligon." Through Jan. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions." The best work in this superb show manages to avoid mimicking the vernacular of Western modernism and postmodernism by drawing upon traditional forms. "Lingga-Yoni," an assemblage by the Indonesian sculptor Nindityo Adipurnomo, takes the Hindu icon of the male and female sex organs and neatly flips it, encasing a delicately decorated lingam in a rough box representing the yoni. N. N. Rimzon's crudely rendered image of a Jain deity menaced by massive swords makes its statement with unapologetic simplicity. The feminist works, on the other hand, seem fainthearted and a bit out of date: an installation by the Korean sculptor Yun Suknam juxtaposes painted figures of women (pure Marisol) and altered furniture (chairs with their upholstery removed or with spikes added), a leaf from the Surrealist playbook. Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.) . . . ¶ **NOTE:** The exhibition extends to N.Y.U.'s Grey Art Gallery (100 Washington Sq. E.; open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 11:30 to 8:30; Saturdays, 11 to 5; through Dec. 23) and to the Queens Museum of Art (Flushing Meadows-Corona Park; open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5; through Jan. 5.) . . . ¶ **NOTE, TOO:** "Treasures from the Asia Society," an unrelated show of works not usually on view, is at the PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St., through Dec. 6.)

CHINA INSTITUTE, 125 E. 65th St.—"The Life of a Patron: Zhou Liangong and the Painters of Seventeenth-Century China" features a re-assembled selection of works from the scholar-official's collection, which he stored on his houseboat. Through Dec. 21. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

THE JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Illegal Camera." The Nazi occupation of the Netherlands is best known to most of us through Anne Frank's diary, but another secret record of the era was made by Dutch photographers, both professional and amateur; a selection of their work has been gathered in this stunning exhibition. Through Dec. 1. . . . ¶ "From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800." Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "Louis I. Kahn Drawings: Travel Sketches and Synagogue Projects." Through Dec. 15. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"A History of Women Photographers," a survey that includes more than two hundred artists. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ Part II of "The Hand of the Poet" presents original manuscripts by the likes of Cummings, Moore, Merrill, Auden, Bishop, Lowell, Moss, Nabokov, and Sexton. Through Jan. 25. . . . ¶ A rotating selection of drawings by Charles Addams, most of which appeared in these pages. Through Jan. 25. . . . ¶ "The Romance of the Stone: Lithography, 1796-1825." Through Jan.

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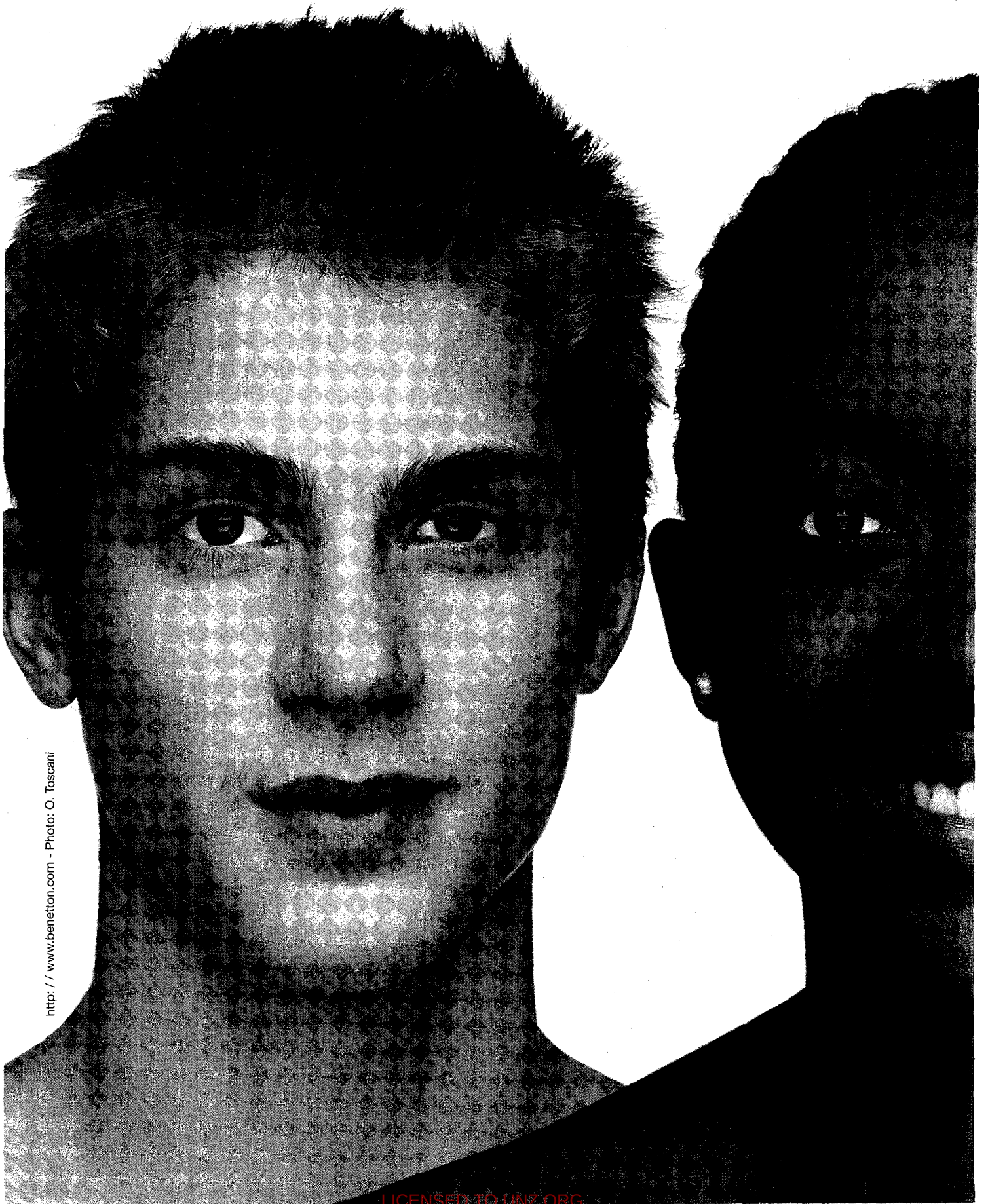
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Above: Rubens Peale with a Geranium, 1801, by Rembrandt Peale (National Gallery of Art, Washington)

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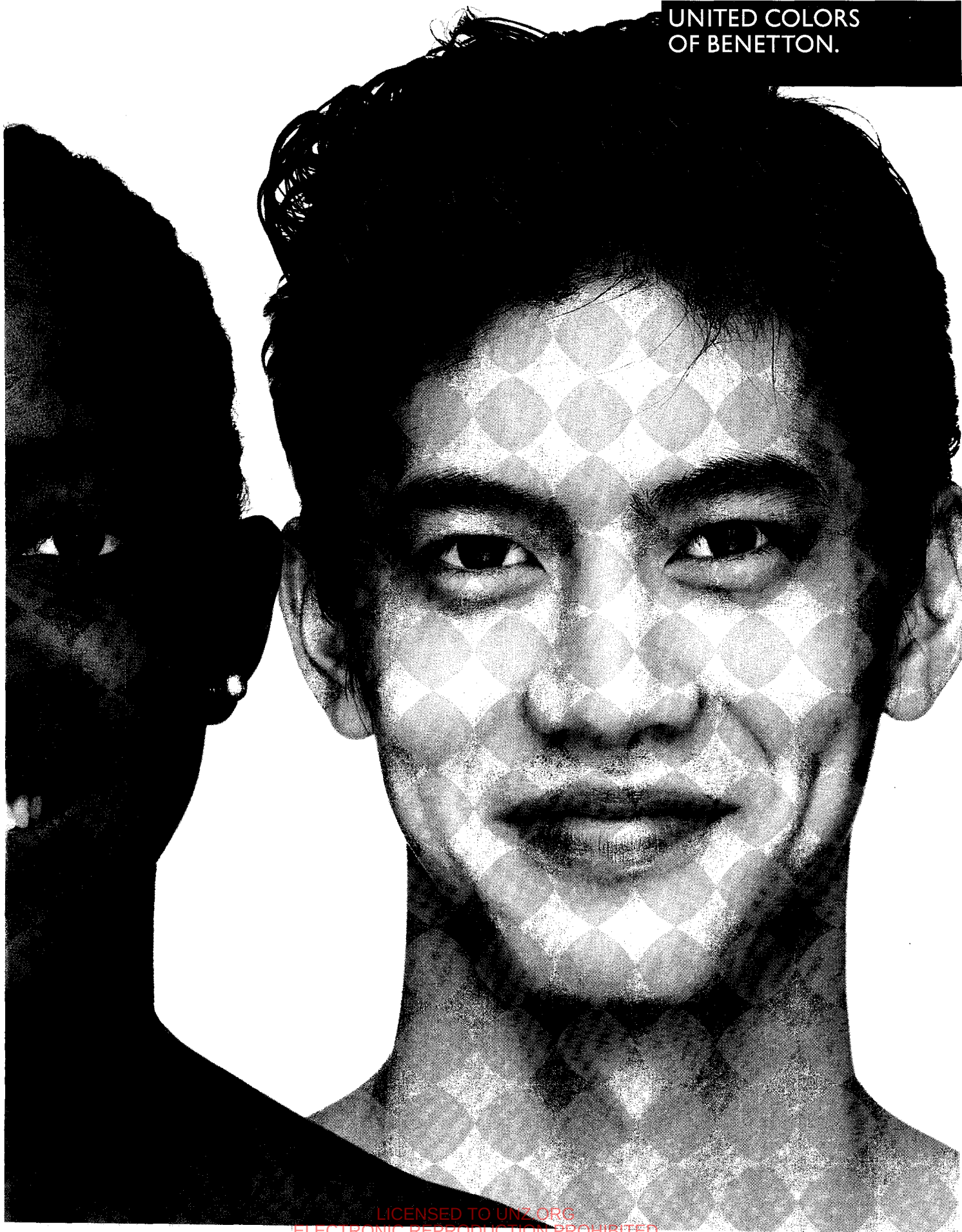


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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, uptown and downtown galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; Chelsea galleries are generally closed Tuesdays and open Sundays.)

TAMARA DE LEMPICKA (1898–1980)—In image after image of luminous women, gleaming cityscapes, and Deco calla lilies, de Lempicka smoothes away the bulks and creases of reality, marrying Léger's machine aesthetic to the more academic *retour à l'ordre* that preoccupied artists in the twenties after the twin insanities of Cubism and the First World War.

The men have the accoutrements of power—dapper suits, aristocratic canes—but their eyes are blank; it is the self-possessed women (from society, myth, and the brothel), with their helmets of hair and their painted lips, whose heavy-lidded eyes hold the knowing gazes. Also on display are works by the artist-architect Iakov Chernikhov (1889–1951). Through Nov. 30. (Friedman, 32 E. 67th St.)

ERIC GOULDER—Five nobly conceived, expertly executed bronze nudes, which attempt to bring heroic sculpture back from extinction. Goulder does elegant work, placing his figures in solemn, eloquent poses that appear to be borrowed from modern dance. Yet, terrible as it is to say, nowadays this sort of idealistic art can't help but look a bit corny. Through Nov. 16. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

PHILIP GUSTON (1913–80)—Some of the most important of the so-called cartoon paintings of the seventies, the artist's final outpouring of inspiration. Few works of art have managed to combine horror and humor so effectively. Metaphor is used like a bludgeon here: in "Cherries II," life is summed up by a bowl of cherries piled so precariously high that they teeter on the verge of collapse. In "Courtroom," a funny little Klansman stands nonchalantly smoking a cheroot in front of a rubbish bin stuffed with scrap lumber and a corpse, while a big, red, Mickey Mouse-gloved hand points at him accusingly. When Guston first exhibited these paintings, he was denounced as a traitor to Abstract Expressionism; now they look a lot like masterpieces. Through Nov. 9. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

LUCAS SAMARAS—A double show. On 57th Street, a survey of works in all sorts of mediums, from 1958 to the present. In SoHo, a selection of previously unexhibited Polaroid "Photo Transformations" from the early seventies. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St., through Nov. 23; and 142 Greene St., starting Nov. 8.)

"MASTERWORKS"—Early paintings by Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella, and early sculptures by Donald Judd. Through Nov. 9. (Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—**FERNANDO BOTERO**, Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Nov. 23. . . .

RALSTON CRAWFORD, Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. Through Nov. 9. . . . **ELAINE DE KOONING**, Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. Through Nov. 30. . . . **EDWIN DICKINSON**, De Nagy (through Nov. 30) and Babcock (through Nov. 22), both at 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. . . . **CAROL DIEHL**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through Nov. 30. . . .

ERIC FISCHL, Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **LOUISE FISHMAN**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 16. . . . **LUCIAN FREUD**, Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; through Nov. 16. . . . **EMIL NOLDE** and **CHRISTIAN ROHLFS**, Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. Both

shows through Nov. 9. . . . **GERHARD RICHTER**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Nov. 30. . . . **DAVID ROW**, Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 9.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

CARL ANDRE—"Prospective Retrospective," a survey of works from the sixties to the present, including a timber piece, a 1966 "scatter" installation consisting of such humdrum elements as pulley wheels and ball bearings, and a few of the artist's signature modular plate pieces. Some of his poems have been mounted near the entrance (each one exists as an individual work, typed by the artist and not intended for reproduction). After twenty-eight years in SoHo, Paula Cooper has moved to the newest art enclave, and her



Self-portrait by Nancy Spero
(P.P.O.W., Tilton, and Kunsthalte).

designed by Richard Gluckman—is an ideal environment in which to contemplate Andre's rigorously simple yet rarefied sculptures. Through Nov. 23. (534 W. 21st St. Open Tuesdays; closed Sundays.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY—Seven new paintings conceived specifically for this gallery's space. Through Jan. 19. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Closed Wednesdays; opens at noon. . . .) A show of Kelly's prints is at Joni Moisant Weyl, 375 West Broadway, through Nov. 13.)

ANDY SPENCE—"Twenty Years of Painting." Often this abstractionist relies on an almost subliminal optical pulsation generated by the rhythmic repetition of rectilinear and curvilinear shapes. The competence and elegance of the works in this survey are given; whether they advance the discourse of abstract painting is another matter. Through Nov. 24. (Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St.)

SHORT LIST—**ANN DALY**, Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. Through Nov. 24. . . . **RENEE GREEN**, Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Through Nov. 24. . . . **MANUEL OCAMPO**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Tuesdays, closed Sundays; through Nov. 9. . . . **PIETER SCHOOLWERTH**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. Opens Sundays at noon; through Nov. 24. . . . **BRENDA ZLAMANY**, Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. Through Nov. 24.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

AY-O—The Fluxus legend's new installation comprises more than two hundred quotidian objects—wine bottle, feather duster, roller skates, kielbasa—suspended from the ceiling. Through Nov. 2. (Harvey, 537 Broadway.)

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960–88)—Since the artist's death, New York has seen a number of shows of inconsequential doodles dug up by his estate, but this one, billed as "an exhibition of important paintings, drawings, and objects," is, remarkably, just that. The large canvases radiate vitality and wit. A tribute to Nat King Cole includes Basquiat's signature cartoon crown, a sketch of the Mona Lisa as a demonic de Kooning woman, and a diagram of the artist's right and left hands (a reference to Cole's hit "Misty"). The most poignant piece is a child's easel painted with a screaming skull, which Basquiat gave to his friend Andy Warhol. Through Nov. 23. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

MICHAEL GOODWIN—A fresh, cool take on that old chestnut the American landscape. In oblong compositions of roadsides in his native Maine, the artist plays with perspective, setting up vanishing points that refuse to vanish. He lays the paint on with creamy luxuriousness, especially in the majestic sunset-lit clouds that soar across many of these canvases; yet an underlying sombreness gives the works a rare tonal complexity. Through Nov. 2. (The Painting Center, 52 Greene St.)

NANCY SPERO—Three concurrent shows of recent work. At **TILTON** (49 Greene St.; through Nov. 9), "Sheela Na-Gig at Home," an installation of hand-printed images of the Celtic fertility figure, hung up to dry with various pieces of lingerie on a clothesline that snakes around the gallery. At **P.P.O.W.** (532 Broadway; through Nov. 16), the hundred-and-eighty-foot scroll "Black and the Red III." **KUNSTHALLE** (210 E. 5th St., at Third Ave.; open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6; through Nov. 10) features two hand-printed silk banners.

LISA YUSKAYE—A new suite of luridly colored canvases, depicting misshapen, doll-like women, which are wildly hip and just about as unpleasant as painting can be; if you were planning to open a discotheque in Purgatory, they would be perfect for the make-out room. Sculptures based upon the paintings are on view in the rear gallery. Through Nov. 16. (Boesky & Gallery, 51 Greene St.)

"MOVING STRUCTURES"—Paintings, sculptures, and installations by Richard Artschwager, Wim Delvoye, Carroll Dunham, Jeff Koons, and Tony Oursler, in a new gallery designed by the architect Rem Koolhaas. Through Nov. 9. (Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St.)

"OOOH BABY!"—A funny, spare selection of paintings, photographs, and sculptures of infants. Pushing the envelope, the curators also present the preserved corpse of a two-headed baby boy (it has been on view at Coney Island since the early seventies)—which is actually rather sweet and even beautiful. Most of the other stuff also grabs the eye, be it James Rosenquist's luminous "Gift Wrapped Doll #31," a quilt whose proto-Pop underside is stitched with squares from twenties-era sacks of Kellogg's Krumbles, or photographer Amy Arbus's huge grid of babies' faces—twenty-one different mugs: angry, super-angry, awestruck, crying (probably hungry), blasé, content, curious, haughty. Good luck, pops. Through Nov. 9. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

"THE WONDER OF HAITIAN ART"—Fanciful cut-out sculptures made of steel from salvaged oil drums, along with paintings by two dozen artists. Through Nov. 2. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

SHORT LIST—**CHRIS BURDEN**, Bonakdar, 130 Prince St. Through Nov. 23. ... **JANE FINE** and **SUSAN BLACK**, Caplan, 48 Greene St. Both shows through Nov. 9. ... **GLENN GOLDBERG** and **RICHARD VAN BUREN**, E. S. Vandam, 100 Vandam St. Opens at noon; both shows through Nov. 16. ... **APRIL GORNIK**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. Through Nov. 9. ... **MARK INNERST**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. Through Nov. 16. ... **BILL KOMOSKI** and **JIM ISERMANN**, Feature, 76 Greene St. Both shows through Nov. 23. ... **SEAN MELLYN**, Kustera, 41 Wooster St. Through Nov. 9. ... **WENDY MILLER**, Arstark, 568 Broadway. Through Dec. 7. ... **ALBERT OEHLEN**, Lühring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through Nov. 16. ... **MATTHEW RITCHIE**, Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. Through Nov. 23. ... **DAVID SANDLIN**, White Columns, 154 Christopher St. Through Nov. 27. ... **BEVERLY SEMMES**, Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through Nov. 30. ... **RICHARD SERRA**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through Dec. 14. ... **PIOTR UKLAŃSKI**, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 558 Broome St., west of Sixth Ave. Through Nov. 16. ... **WILLIAM WEGMAN**, Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through Nov. 30. ... **FRANZ WEST**, Zwirner, 43 Greene St. Through Nov. 30.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S—Oct. 30: Sales of clocks (with emphasis on the work of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Parisian horologists) and European ceramics. ... ¶ Oct. 31: French furniture and Korean art works. ... ¶ Nov. 1-2: Japanese art. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) ... At **CHRISTIE'S EAST**: Rare comic books and promotional premiums. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400. Nov. 1.)

SOTHEBY'S—Oct. 30: An arcade sale of American paintings. ... ¶ Nov. 2: French furniture. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

SWANN'S—An auction of nearly nine hundred books and manuscripts about whales and whaling. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Oct. 28-29.)

PHILLIPS'S—An auction of antique and modern jewelry and wares. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Oct. 29.)

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TSENG KWONG CHI: "Provincetown, Massachusetts" and "Paris, France," two photographs from "East Meets West: The Expeditionary Series," now on view at the Julie Saul gallery, 560 Broadway, through November 30.

SHORT MARCH—When he emigrated with his family from Hong Kong to Vancouver, at the age of sixteen, Tseng (1950-90) had already shown a prodigious gift for painting and calligraphy. At the Académie Julien, in Paris, he threw over painting for photography. In 1979, he made his way to New York City and immediately lit out on what would become his life's work—an obsessive series of self-portraits at monuments, tourist attractions, and vista points, mostly in Europe and North



America: the Statue of Liberty, Disneyland, the Eiffel Tower, the Grand Canyon, the Provincetown dunes. Striking impassive poses in mirrored sunglasses, a gray Mao suit, and, often, a clip-on photo I.D., Tseng became, in his words, an "ambiguous ambassador" to the world. With endearing humor, his images stand ideas of tourism, nationality, power, and aesthetics on their head, even as his wistfulness (especially in the smaller, looser pictures) betrays a fine and fragile sensibility.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LEE FRIEDLANDER—"The Desert Seen," two dozen images of the Sonoran Desert in Arizona that showcase one of this artist's greatest strengths: the ability to keep every detail in play, side to side, foreground to back. Neural thickets of palo-verde branches and ocotillo tendrils lunge to the front and across the picture plane; steadfast saguaros butt in occasionally but remain most comfortable in the middle ground. Different ways of seeing are as much the subject as the terrain itself, which Friedlander's vision renders plain and disturbing and gorgeous all at once. Through Nov. 23. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

CHARLES HOFF (1905-75)—Twenty pictures of boxers in the ring, by a midcentury newspaperman who brilliantly captured the drama of the moment of impact—bloody faces in mouthpiece grimaces, bow-tied referees getting out of the way, exhausted bodies bending in directions they shouldn't and falling to the mat. With his fine lighting and quick shutter, he even picked up the sprays of sweat. Through Nov. 16. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

MARY ELLEN MARK—Mark's black-and-white pictures of destitute families, runaway children, Indian and Vietnamese circus performers, and others on the fringe synthesize the best qualities of photojournalism, portraiture, and documentary photography. Among the most affecting images in this modest thirty-year survey is one of a Gypsy boy and girl in their homely trailer camp in Barcelona; while the girl looks calmly away, the boy addresses the photographer squarely, and the glittering butterfly mask he wears fails to hide his budding fear. Through Nov. 1. (School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 9 to 8; Fridays, 9 to 5.)

MASAO YAMAMOTO—"A Box of Ku." Ku is Japanese for "air," "emptiness," and "sky"; this enchanting installation comprises scores of small pictures, some taped to the wall, some in decorative frames. Through Nov. 16. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

IWAO YAMAWAKI (1898-1987)—Elegant photographs taken between 1930 and 1932, when the Japanese avant-garde architect was studying at the Bauhaus. He swallowed the institution's design principles whole, looking at modern buildings with a Bauhaus slant (lit-

erally) and making striking abstractions out of bubbles, stockings, and cabbages. Through Nov. 16. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

"HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON IN AMERICA 1935-1975"—Much of this show dates from 1946-47, when the photographer travelled widely here. The front room is devoted to crisp, intricately composed pictures of New York which make a city dweller want to borrow Cartier-Bresson's eyes for a while. His America is everywhere imprinted with wry joy. Through Nov. 2. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. Open Mondays; opens Saturdays at noon.)

"CHIM: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF DAVID SEYMOUR"—A thorough survey of the career of the Polish Jewish photojournalist, from the thirties, when he photographed striking miners and leftist authors for the French magazine *Regards*, to 1956, the year he was gunned down while covering the Suez crisis. Through Nov. 3. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

GROUP SHOW—An exhibition celebrating the twenty-year presence in Paris of the Zabriske gallery, whose 57th Street branch has introduced such photographers as Edouard Baldus, Laure Albin-Guillot, John Batho, and Pierre Boucher to the United States. Through Nov. 15. (La Maison Française, New York University, 16 Washington Mews. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

SHORT LIST—**ROY ARDEN**, American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. Through Nov. 2. ... **HORACE BRISTOL**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 16. ... **CHUCK CLOSE**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 23. ... **NAN GOLDIN**, Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through Dec. 21. ... **ABELARDO MORELL**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through Nov. 30. ... **MATTHIEU RICARD**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Through Dec. 28. ... **MIGUEL RIO BRANCO**, Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through Nov. 16. ... **STEPHEN SACK**, Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through Nov. 23. ... **CINDY SHERMAN**, Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through Nov. 23. ... **ALEX WEBB**, Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens at noon; through Dec. 4.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, The Jewish Museum, and the New York Public Library.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**RIGOLETTTO**, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Frank Lopardo, and Juan Pons; conducted by Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 30 at 7:30 and Nov. 2 at 8.) ... **CARMEN**, in the opening performances of a new production, with Angela Gheorghiu, Waltraud Meier, Plácido Domingo, and Sergei Leiferkus; James Levine. (Oct. 31 at 7 and Nov. 4 at 7:30.) ... **THE BARTERED BRIDE**, with Gwynne Geyer, David Kuebler, Vladimir Bogachov, and Paul Plishka; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 1 at 8.) ... **LA TRAVIATA**, with Ainhoa Arteta, Marcello Giordani, and Roberto Frontali; Maurizio Barbacini. (Nov. 2 at 1:30 and Nov. 5 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**. (Oct. 31 at 8.) ... **THE TURN OF THE SCREW**. (Nov. 1 at 8.) ... **CARMEN**. (Nov. 2 at 1:30.) ... **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**. (Nov. 2 at 8.) ... **H.M.S. PINAFORE**. (Nov. 3 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, with Bobby McFerrin (who has been taking conducting lessons) on the podium. Oct. 31 at 6:45 and Nov. 2 at 2 (the latter a Young People's Concert): Mozart's Overture to "Le Nozze di Figaro," Fauré's celebrated Pavane (with Mr. McFerrin singing a vocal line), and Bizet's Symphony in C. ... ♫ Nov. 1-2 at 8 and Nov. 5 at 7:30: The three works listed above, as well as Mozart's D-Minor Piano Concerto (with Chick Corea) and voice-and-piano improvisations with Messrs. McFerrin and Corea. (875-5030.)

FINNISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Beethoven's Violin Concerto (Op. 61) befuddled listeners at its premiere, in 1806; its grand scope and its integration of the solo and the orchestral parts were essentially without precedent, and the fact that the soloist was reportedly sight-reading his part can't have helped. Nonetheless, the composer, pianist, and music publisher Muzio Clementi knew quality when he heard it, and he quickly negotiated the piece's British publication rights and commissioned Beethoven to prepare a companion version of it for piano and orchestra. The resulting D-Major Piano Concerto (Op. 61a) has never found much of a following, but its interest is hardly negligible: while most of it is a rather direct transcription of the original text (which sounds far more idiomatic on the violin), Beethoven added four long and novel cadenzas for the piano. Olli Mustonen is the soloist in this performance of Op. 61a. The program also includes two short works by Sibelius ("The Lover" and the C-Major Romance) and Mozart's Symphony No. 41. Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 30 at 8.)

IVES FROM UPSTATE—Last summer, the Bard Music Festival turned a microscope on the music of Charles Ives. Now the festival extends its examinations in a weekend at Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 2 at 2:30: The Colorado String Quartet plays quartets by Horatio Parker, Max Reger, and Ives (his Second). ... At 8: Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra and the Yale Glee Club in several pieces by Ives (including his "Robert Browning Overture"), as well as in music by John J. Becker and Henry Cowell (his Piano Concerto, with Philip Mead). ... ♫ Nov. 3 at 3:30: Vernacular pieces from turn-of-the-century America, and works by Ives that strongly reflect their influence. ... **NOTE:** Lectures or panel discussions precede all concerts. (875-5050.)

VIENNA SYMPHONY—Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos leads Mozart's "Serenata Notturna" (K. 239), as well as Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Rudolf Buchbinder) and Symphony No. 7. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 3 at 3.)

"ACTUS TRAGICUS"—Every year since 1992, the Church of St. Luke in the Fields has pre-

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sented a program of sacred music to commemorate the lives of people who have died of AIDS. In this year's concert, David Shuler directs two dark masterpieces from the German Baroque: Bach's Cantata No. 106 (the 1707 funeral cantata "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit," also widely known as the "Actus Tragicus") and Buxtehude's "Fried- und Freudenreiche Hinfarth" (which the composer wrote, at least in part, for his father's funeral). (487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Nov. 3 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

BACHWORKS—"Actus Tragicus" junkies could probably trek the fifteen or so blocks uptown from St. Luke in the Fields to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in time to catch it again, this time coupled with Bach's Cantata No. 80 ("Ein feste Burg"), with Richard Erickson leading his singers and instrumentalists. (315 W. 22nd St. Nov. 3 at 5. Tickets at the door.)

MUSICA VIVA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—Walter Klauss leads Giovanni Gabrieli's "In Ecclesiis" and several of his canzonas for brass, Monteverdi's six-voice Magnificat and some of his "Scherzi Musicali," and Schütz's motets "Jauchzet dem Herren" and "Fili mi Absalom" (both of which reflect the influence of the early-Baroque Venetian style). (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 794-3646. Nov. 3 at 7.)

RECITALS

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—An all-Bach concert that includes the "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 2 and the Cantata No. 202 (with soprano Heidi Grant Murphy). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 30 at 8.)

PARNASSUS—The twentieth-century-music ensemble performs the premiere of Anthony Korf's Duo for Violin and Piano, as well as Dutilleux's "Le Jeu des Contraires," Bartók's "Contrasts," Busoni's "Elégie" and "Novellette" (for clarinet and piano), and Carter's "Gra." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 30 at 8.)

LE PIANO FRANCAIS—French piano playing has traditionally exalted a lyrical approach to phrasing, transparency of voicing, a quicksilver touch, and extreme attention to sonority (tied in with a complex approach to pedalling). Truly idiomatic interpretation of the keyboard repertoire of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, and other Gallic composers (most of whom were accomplished pianists themselves) absolutely requires these characteristics, and French-style pianism can also illuminate music that in other hands can sound uncomfortably dense (such as Schumann) or merely ultra-virtuosic (such as Liszt or Rachmaninoff). Although national variations of technique have blurred considerably since the Second World War, it's still possible to hear remnants of the classic approaches. This week, the Miller Theatre begins a recital series that spotlights three pianists who continue to uphold aspects of the French style. Oct. 30 at 8: Abdel Rahman El Bacha, born in Lebanon but schooled at the Paris Conservatoire, performs Ravel's "Miroirs" and "Gaspard de la Nuit," Schubert's A-Minor Sonata (D. 784), and Schumann's F-Minor Sonata. . . . ♫ Nov. 3 at 3: Jean-Efflam Bavouzet plays Debussy's Études (Books One and Two) and "Children's Corner," as well as Maurice Ohana's "Trois Études d'Interprétation" and the Prelude and "Liebestod" from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" (as transcribed by Liszt and further touched up by Zoltán Kocsis). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. The series concludes on Nov. 7, with a recital by Jean-Philippe Collard.)

BARGEMUSIC—Three Peskanovs (violinist Mark, flutist Lu Ann, and pianist Alexander) join soprano DeBorge Pinnington and cellist Dmitry Yablonsky to perform music by Schubert, Mozart, Prokofiev (his Flute Sonata), and Beethoven (the "Ghost" Trio). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Oct. 31 at 7:30 and Nov. 3 at 4.)

SONIC BOOM FESTIVAL—This annual event is a showcase for a handful of the city's leading

contemporary-music groups, five of which will present concerts in November under the festival's auspices. Four of these—the New York New Music Ensemble, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Continuum, and Speculum Musicae—collaborate in the opening event, a sampler of their diverse styles and repertoires that this year includes music by Poul Ruders, Frederic Rzewski, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Thomas Ades. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 1 at 8.)

CELIA LINDE—Classical guitarist, in a recital of music from Latin America and her native Sweden. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. 249-8950. Nov. 1 at 8.)

RICHARD STONE AND LISA TERRY—The lutenist and the cellist perform Baroque music, including works by Leopold Silvius Weiss, Domenico Gabrieli, Vivaldi, and Geminiani. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Nov. 3 at 2. Tickets at the door.)

NEW YORK WIND SOLOISTS—In a concert that spotlights woodwind quintets written in the nineteen-twenties, by Villa-Lobos, Nielsen, and Hindemith. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 3 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

ALAN GAMPPEL—The pianist presents a talk-and-play Chopin program. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Nov. 3 at 3.)

SAISON SOIRÉES—Violinist Haesun Park, violist

lesiana") and Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (composer of "Il Segreto di Susanna" and "I Gioielli della Madonna"). (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Nov. 4 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

LAURA MIKKOLA—Pianist, in a recital that includes sonatas by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 13, No. 1) and Prokofiev (his Sixth). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 4 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

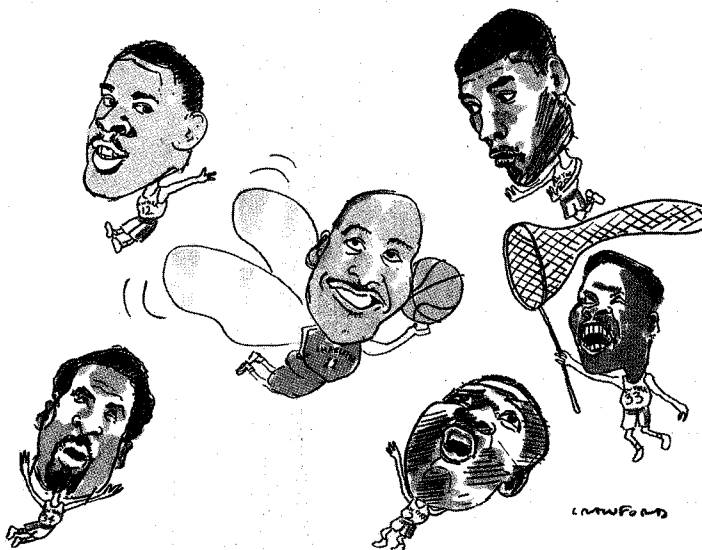
VERTICAL LEAP OF FAITH—Few N.B.A. teams came close to the Knicks this year in terms of off-season improvement. They had a great draft, signing three strong picks, and they acquired a quality starting backcourt, luring free agents Allan Houston and Chris Childs from Detroit and New Jersey, respectively. Quondam shooting guard John Starks moved—with surprising grace—to a sixth-man role. But perhaps the most dramatic improvement is the one that sent Anthony Mason—who muffed his big chance to become a star in his home town last year by turning into a sullen, moody headache—to the Charlotte Hornets in exchange for Larry Johnson, a player who, besides bringing the Knicks nearly twenty points and ten rebounds per game, is someone you could actually like. Bad Mouth Mase returns to

the Garden when the Knicks play the Hornets on November 3, and the Mason-Johnson matchup should provide a brawny subplot to the home opener. But don't let that distract you from the team's longterm prospects; even if the mixture doesn't jell right away, there's every reason to expect the new-look Knicks to get better and better. (Madison Square Garden. 465-5867.)

READINGS—Nov. 4 at 7:30: Heinz Insu Fenkl reads from his first novel, "Memories of My Ghost Brother." (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ♫ Nov.

4 at 8: Swedish poets Katarina Frostenson, Lars Gustafsson, Göran Sonnevi, and Birgitta Trotzig read from their work, in Swedish and English, with assistance from their American translators, the poets Rika Lesser and Robert Bly. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

TALKS—Oct. 31 at 7: Michael Drake, the director of Tucson's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, sifts through late-breaking theories about the origin of the moon. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5200.) . . . ♫ Nov. 1 at 6:30: After screening movies about the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinations, Dick Gregory considers the effects of political violence. (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. 718-638-5000.) . . . ♫ Nov. 2 at 2: Curator Leslie Nolan of the Museum of the City of New York recalls the heyday of mudslinging, using early-twentieth-century examples from the institution's political-cartoon collection. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 534-1672. No charge beyond museum admission.) . . . ♫ Nov. 4 at 6: Baseball play-by-play announcers John Sterling (Yankees), Gary Cohen (Mets), and Joe Castiglione (Red Sox), among others, talk about talking on the air. (Museum of Television & Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. 307-7171.)



Early buzz: the Knicks open against Anthony Mason's Hornets.

Rachel Shapiro, cellist Iris Regev, and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform both of Mozart's piano quartets. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 3 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

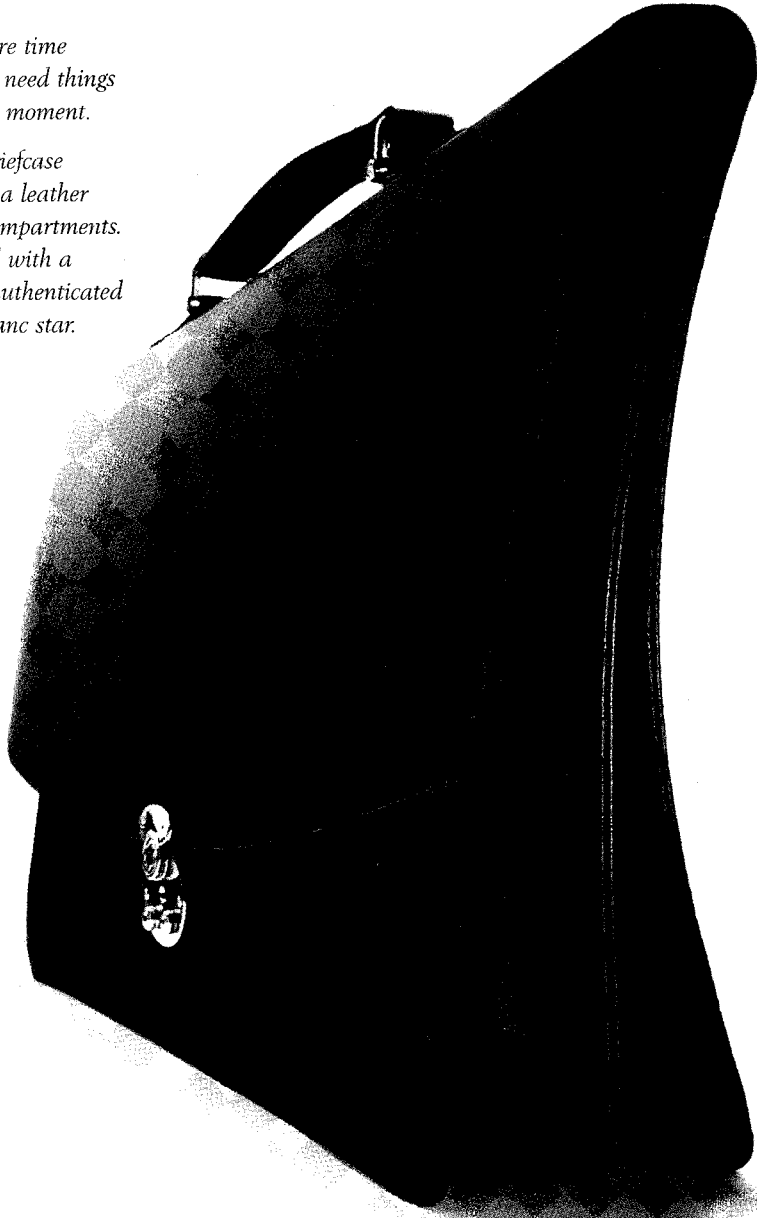
GALIMIR TRIBUTE—In his long career, the octogenarian violinist Felix Galimir has racked up historic successes as a performer (his Galimir String Quartet, for example, was one of the earliest champions of Berg's "Lyric Suite" and Ravel's Quartet), but he has had an even more enduring impact as a teacher. Asked recently to name a musician who especially inspired them, a bevy of big-name chamber players independently singled him out. In this tribute, he is saluted by soprano Benita Valente, pianist Richard Goode, the Orion String Quartet, and the Mannes Orchestra (conducted by Michael Charry), in a program that comprises Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 503), Berg's String Quartet (Op. 3), a group of Schumann lieder, and Schoenberg's chamber arrangement of Johann Strauss's "Emperor Waltz." A benefit concert. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 4 at 8.)

VERISIMO TRIO—In this concert, the ensemble performs piano trios by two composers better known for their operas: Francesco Cilea (most famous for "Adriana Lecouvreur") and "L'Ar-

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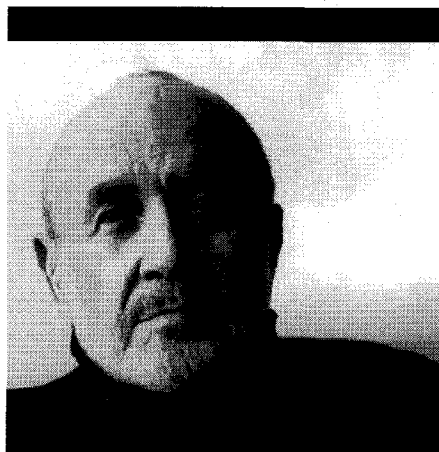
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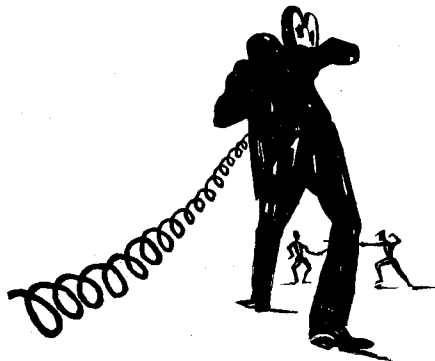
"The ambulance people came, and I whispered to them that I could not walk or sit up. Or breathe. They went down for a gurney and oxygen. Breathing through a tube in my nose and motionless and sheeted on a gurney, I was wheeled through our apartment and into the elevator and across the lobby, past the doorman, onto the sidewalk, into the air briefly, and then into the ambulance. This is how my life ended. And my dying began."

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THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

BAD MOON—After being bitten by a strange animal in the Himalayas, a photojournalist (Michael Pare) returns home to the States a changed man, in a thriller written and directed by Eric Red, from Wayne Smith's 1992 novel, "Thor." With Mariel Hemingway. Opening Nov. 1. (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gemini, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

DEAR GOD—Greg Kinnear plays a con man who takes a job in the dead-letter department of the post office, in a comedy directed by Garry Marshall and written by Warren Leight and Ed Kaplan. Opening Nov. 1. (Art Greenwich Twin, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and 34th Street Showplace.)

THE FUNERAL—Abel Ferrara directs Chris Penn, Christopher Walken, Vincent Gallo, Benicio Del Toro, Annabella Sciorra, and Isabella Rossellini in a drama about an Italian-American family in Depression-era New York. Opening Nov. 1. (Angelika Film Center and 84th Street Sixplex.)

LARGER THAN LIFE—A comedy written by Roy Blount, Jr., and directed by Howard Franklin, featuring Bill Murray and a four-ton elephant on a cross-country trip. With Janeane Garofalo and Matthew McConaughey. Opening Nov. 1. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly.)

MAN WITH A PLAN—Fred Tuttle plays himself, a septuagenarian Vermont farmer, in a fictional satire, written and directed by John O'Brien, in which Tuttle runs for Congress. Opening Nov. 1. (Cinema Village.)

MERCY—A New York City lawyer (John Rubinstein) tries to save his daughter (Rhea Silver Smith) from kidnappers, in a thriller written and directed by Richard Shepard. Opening Nov. 1. (Village East Cinemas.)

MOTHER NIGHT—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 1. (Cinema II and Village East Cinemas.)

A SINGLE GIRL—Virginie Ledoyen has the title role in Benoît Jacquot's drama about a pregnant Parisienne who leaves her boyfriend and takes a job in a hotel. Written by the director and Jérôme Beaujour. In French. Opening Oct. 30. (Film Forum.)

UNHOOK THE STARS—A drama co-written (with Helen Caldwell) and directed by Nick Cassavetes, starring Gena Rowlands as a suburban widow whose children have grown up and left home. With Marisa Tomei and Gérard Depardieu. Opening Oct. 30. (Lincoln Square, 68th St. Playhouse, and Village East Cinemas.)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO AND JULIET—Leonardo DiCaprio represents the Montagues and Claire Danes the Capulets in Baz Luhrmann's version of the tragedy. With John Leguizamo, Paul Sorvino, and Brian Dennehy. Screenplay by the director and Craig Pearce. Opening Nov. 1. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, 84th Street Sixplex, National Twin, Orpheum VII, and 34th St. East.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 33.)

BIG NIGHT—The actor Stanley Tucci co-wrote (with Joseph Tropiano), co-directed (with Campbell Scott), and co-stars (with Tony Shalhoub) in this elegant, leisurely low-budget comedy about a struggling Italian restaurant run by a pair of immigrant brothers. The unusually happy, relaxed ensemble includes Ian Holm, Isabella Rossellini, Minnie Driver, Allison Janney, and Campbell Scott. The big set piece—a lavish dinner in honor of the singer-bandleader Louis Prima—is a fitting climax to the movie's patient accumulation of savory and blissfully pointless delights: a convincing illustration of how keen pleasure for pleasure's sake can be.—T.R. (9/23/96) (Angelika Film Center, 86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

THE CHAMBER—Just a few months after this summer's senseless hit "A Time to Kill," another bloated John Grisham legal thriller gets the overblown, overacted Hollywood treatment. In this one, Chris O'Donnell stars as a vain young attorney determined to save his grandfather (Gene Hackman), a redneck K.K.K. murderer, from execution. While O'Donnell does his Tom Cruise best to appear serious and engaged, Hackman turns in one of his rare histrionic and unconvincing performances. James Foley's directorial style demands attention—the film flails all over the place in an attempt to appear tense and authoritative—but the plot never takes hold. This is generic made-for-TV fodder (racism is bad, it's wrong to take a life) dressed up like a smart, sassy lawyer: expensively.—B.D. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, National Twin, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas. . . .) (Coronet; through Oct. 31.)

THE FIRST WIVES CLUB—Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler, and Diane Keaton, three of America's finest comic actresses, get together for the first time, and the best that Hollywood has to offer them is this loud empowerment comedy. The premise—old friends meet at a funeral and find that they have something in common: their husbands are leaving them for younger women—sounds like a fair taking-off point for some wicked comedy. But all that the scenarist, Robert Harling, can think of to follow it up with is a tepid revenge fantasy in which they bond and dole out justice to their cheating men. The director, Hugh Wilson, aims for harmless froth, and what he winds up with, as the hysteria level rises, is something brash and strident.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS—Michael Douglas, who produced, has hideously miscast himself as a great white hunter in director Stephen Hopkins's attempt at an African adventure. The screenplay, about two lions that have been devouring the African workers at a British bridge-building camp in late-nineteenth-century Kenya, was written by William Goldman in a style reminiscent of such great colonial trash epics of the fifties as "Elephant Walk" and "The Rains of Ranchipur." But all that Douglas can think of to do while the mystical declamation and the body count both soar is swagger around like Iron John. It doesn't help that he's teamed with Val Kilmer, who, as the bridge's chief architect, faces danger with an upper lip as stiff as Stewart Granger's. Mediocre camerawork and flashy editing combine to spoil any thrill of the hunt; the fake environment of "Jurassic Park" invited greater curiosity.—B.D. (Art Greenwich Twin, Astor Plaza, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6. . . .) (34th St. East; through Oct. 31.)

THE GRASS HARP—Truman Capote loosely based his 1951 novella on his childhood with spinster

aunts in the South. In Charles Matthau's sentimental adaptation, Piper Laurie and Sissy Spacek, who were a mother and daughter in De Palma's "Carrie," are reunited as the sisters. Spacek smartly underplays the proper Verena's businesslike brilliance. As Dolly, Laurie has been saddled with too many saintly attributes, but she makes her character an ethereal earth mother, giving her the weight to carry her head-in-the-clouds lines, and delivers a remarkable performance. The cast is filled with wonderful actors: Walter Matthau (the director's father), Roddy McDowall, Mary Steenburgen, Jack Lemmon, and sleepy, doe-eyed Edward Furlong as the sensitive young narrator. But the writers, Stirling Silliphant and Kirk Ellis, underestimate the poetic power of Capote's quiet storytelling, underlining emotions that should merely be suggested, and, though Matthau's direction is clean, he compounds their mawkishness by cueing the audience's responses with syrupy music. It's not a bad film by any means, just an obvious one.—B.D. (Cinema 3rd Avenue, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

JUDE—In adapting Thomas Hardy's "Jude the Obscure," the screenwriter, Hossein Amini, and the director, Michael Winterbottom, have dropped the obscurity from the title, but the Jude who remains (played by Christopher Eccleston) still looks as dour and defeated as any reader of Hardy could wish. The movie is in fact remarkably true to the darkness and chafing disgust of the novel, and that fidelity is where the problem lies. Jude, the stonemason who dreams of becoming a scholar, is mired in failure from the start; even as you respect the picture for its earth-toned palette and its bestial pain, you know that any dramatic momentum will lead nowhere. As a result, the bond of love between Jude and Sue (Kate Winslet) seems more like an endurance trial, or the difficult rapport of a brother and sister. She chatters and smokes as if she were a free spirit of the

nineteen-twenties; he looks trapped in the old century. There is much to admire here, almost nothing to enjoy. But the picture needs to be seen, not least for the skill with which Winterbottom frames the swift, unmitigated horror of the climax.—A.L. (Lincoln Square.)

THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT—After the disaster of "Cutthroat Island," Geena Davis and her husband, director Renny Harlin, have teamed up again for what they intend as a coolly slam-bang action movie, but it's a leaden affair. Davis plays an amnesiac schoolteacher who gradually realizes that she's been trained as a spy; she is partnered by the ever reliable Samuel L. Jackson, who, as a private eye, gives the dumb proceedings some badly needed playfulness. But the poor pacing and bad editing kill any hope of slickness. It's not all bad: the writer, Shane Black (of "Lethal Weapon" fame), throws some funny gibes into his incoherent script; Harlin stages a few spectacular stunts; and Davis and Jackson have real chemistry—in fact, they shine together so smartly that they probably could have come up with a better movie by ad-libbing.—B.D. (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

MICHAEL COLLINS—The short life and lasting legend of the Irish freedom fighter Michael Collins, compressed into a vigorous movie by the writer and director Neil Jordan. It doesn't have the swooning strangeness at which Jordan excels, but there is still a driven quality—the film resembles one of Jean-Pierre Melville's gangster thrillers, brooded over by a darker destiny. Collins, who began by killing the British on the streets of Dublin, ended up talking to them at the conference table; he died at the hands of a fellow-Irishman in 1922. Liam Neeson gives a hefty performance as the hero, but the film takes too much care insuring that we like and admire him, cooling the figure's hot temper and ig-

noring any sins of the flesh (let alone of the spirit) which he committed—he remains devoted to Kitty Kiernan (Julia Roberts). Many of the characters seem rather thin and milky, and historians will balk at the political simplifications. The strength of the movie resides mainly in the work of its cameraman, Chris Menges, who delivers a barrage of images as rousing and changeable as the fortunes of Collins himself.—A.L. (10/14/96) (Beekman, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

MICROCOSMOS—A revelatory documentary about insects. The directors, Claude Nuridsany and Marie Perennou, who were trained as biologists, spent years designing cameras that would capture spiders, butterflies, beetles, and bees in their habitats as never before. There are no voice-overs, just closeups of bugs; a few sequences surpass the most horrific science fiction, but a surprising number of the creatures are quite cute.—S.K. (Film Forum 3.)

SECRETS & LIES—Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), the heroine of Mike Leigh's broadest and most ambitious film to date, decides after the death of her adoptive mother to seek her biological one. The quest turns up Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn), who freaks out: Hortense is middle-class and black, Cynthia working-class and white. Jean-Baptiste gives a quiet, pacific performance; Blethyn deals in spasms of exaggeration which belong in another film altogether. Still, there is a fine supporting cast, and they all gather in the final scene, a cathartic barbecue that starts off as nicely choreographed light comedy and darkens to a Bergman-like chorus of wailing women and slightly overcooked dialogue.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

SLEEPERS—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

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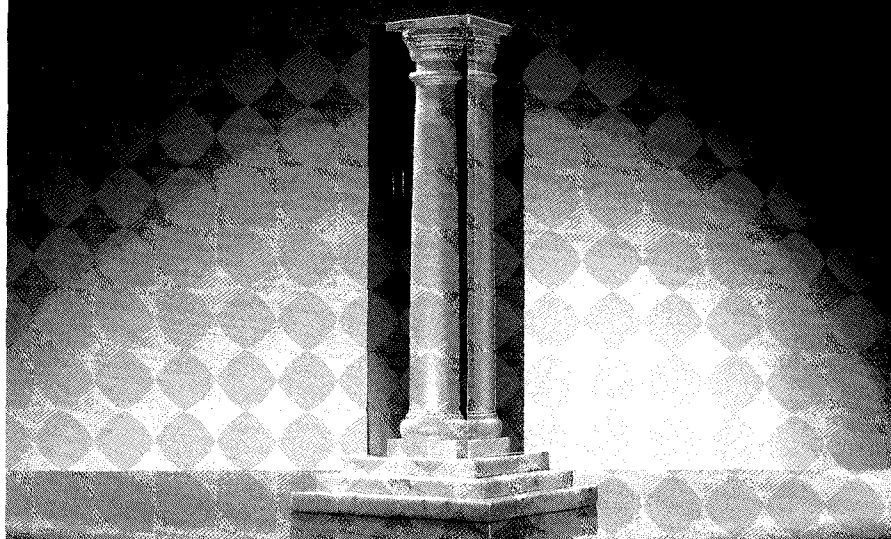
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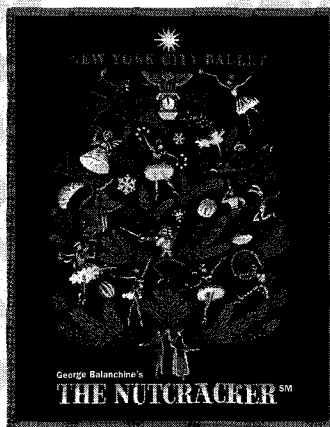
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SWINGERS—This funny, boys-on-the-town story, an ode to friendship and cruising for girls, has the makings of one of the most popular date movies of the year. The writer, Jon Favreau, co-stars with Vince Vaughn, a handsome new actor, and they're hilarious—picture Steve Martin and Dan Aykroyd's wild and crazy guys saddled with the young Woody Allen's sexual neuroses. But the film isn't a bubbleheaded comedy. The director, Doug Liman, follows his characters through swinging-singles hangouts from Hollywood to Vegas with a neon-soaked camera; his nighttime images are pure Scorsese. And, beneath all the hip talk and the funny predicaments, his two heroes are wistful, stargazing romantics. The picture is full of energy, but it moves like a dream.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and 84th Street Sixplex. . . Cinema II; through Oct. 31.)

THAT THING YOU DO!—Tom Hanks's debut as a writer and director traces the rapid rise and fall of a fictitious rock-and-roll band called the Wonders. Hanks plays a supporting role, as a slick record-company executive; his performance, modest and tossed-off though it is, effortlessly outclasses his thin script and primitive direction.—T.R. (10/7/96) (Baronet, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, National Twin, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)



Opening October 30 at Film Forum,
Virginie Ledoyen in "A Single Girl."

THREE LIVES AND ONLY ONE DEATH—Marcello Mastroianni stars as an errant husband, a Sorbonne professor, a butler, and a businessman, in four witty vignettes. The director, Raúl Ruiz, has an avant-gardist reputation, but he obviously loves the corny enchantment of old-fashioned storytelling. The surprise is that the picture improves whenever Mastroianni is out of it—his charisma and radiance are too strong. In French (though it's one of the Chilean-born Ruiz's jokes that almost everyone is foreign and speaks with an accent).—S.K. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and The Screening Room.)

ALSO PLAYING

THE ASSOCIATE: Chelsea Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 1, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII. . . **BASQUIAT** (reviewed in our issue of 8/19/96): Angelika Film Center. . . **BEAUTIFUL THING:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . **BOUND:** Chelsea Cinemas and Village Theatre VII. . . **BULLET-PROOF:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . **CAUGHT:** 59th Street East Cinema. . . **CURTIS'S CHARM:** Quad Cinema. . . **EMMA** (8/5/96): Cinema 3. . . **THE FAN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . **GET ON THE BUS:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII,

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and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE GLIMMER MAN:** Criterion Center. . . . **HIGH SCHOOL HIGH:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gemini, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **INDEPENDENCE DAY** (7/15/96): Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **JOHN CARPENTER'S ESCAPE FROM L.A.:** Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LONE STAR** (7/8/96): Guild. . . . **LOOKING FOR RICHARD:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **PALOOKAVILLE:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **THE PROPRIETOR:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **STEPHEN KING'S THINNER:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 2, Embassy 3, First & 62nd Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **THE SUNCHASER:** Lincoln Square. . . . **SURVIVING PICASSO:** Paris and Village Theatre VII. . . . **TRAINSPOTTING** (7/22/96): Angelika Film Center. . . . **TREES LOUNGE:** Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII. . . . **TO GILLIAN ON HER 37TH BIRTHDAY:** Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **TWELFTH NIGHT:** Regency, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM,
except where noted.)

ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th St.
ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BARONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
CORONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY I, Broadway at 46th St.
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GEMINI, Second Ave. at 64th St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
MANHATTAN TWIN, Third Ave. at 59th St.
METRO CINEMA I AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NATIONAL TWIN, Broadway at 44th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St.
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON I AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd St.
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAVERLY I AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

DOULOS—THE FINGER MAN (1962)—The writer-director, Jean-Pierre Melville, plays a game of macho bluff, staging despicable acts in his brute-elegant style (legato builds, staccato payoffs), then divulging his thugs' often righteous motives. That's not as exasperating as it sounds. He has cast two skillfully ambiguous actors in the key roles: Serge Reggiani, as a thief who sets off a convoluted chain reaction of betrayal and revenge, and Jean-Paul Belmondo, as his friend, a criminal fixer who's also a police stoolie. And Melville brings conviction and a geometric beauty to his story's code-of-the-street mystique. (The precision of the triangulated violence influenced directors from Walter Hill to Quentin Tarantino.) With Michel Piccoli. From a novel by Pierre Lesou; photographed by Nicolas Hayer. In French.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 1 and Nov. 3.)

HARD, FAST AND BEAUTIFUL (1951)—Despite having a grasping mom (Claire Trevor), an amateur tennis champ (Sally Forrest) sees the error of money-grubbing in this soft, slow, and homely movie. Martha Wilkerson's script takes digs that haven't dated at the corrupting power of big-time sports, but it pins the ultimate blame for almost everything on the selfishness of the mother, who's dissatisfied with her weak husband and her boring middle-class life. Wilkerson and the director, Ida Lupino, are so intent on pillorying materialism and elevating domesticity that they don't allow you to empathize with Trevor's itchiness; they fail to guide Trevor toward any revelations—of the kind Lupino herself found as an actress in "The Hard Way"—that could redeem the melodrama. (Actually, Forrest in her "hard, fast" phase resembles Lupino in her ingenue days.) From a novel by John R. Tunis. With Carleton G. Young and Robert Clarke.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 2.)

IMITATION OF LIFE (1959)—The second film version of Fannie Hurst's novel about the friendship of two widowed mothers, one white (Lana Turner) and one black (Juanita Moore), is a B-52 tearjerker. That feminist and auteurist film historians have hailed the director, Douglas Sirk, for his subversive handling of Universal's women's pictures would come as a jolt to the millions who simply wept through the heartbreak of Moore's daughter (Susan Kohner) trying to pass for white and Turner's daughter (Sandra Dee) falling in love with her mother's fiancé (John Gavin). In the 1934 original, the white woman uses the black woman's pancake recipe to found a booming Aunt Jemima-like business; Sirk thought that the black mother would be more like "the typical Negro" if she had nothing to do with Turner's business. So in his remake Turner is an aspiring actress who ascends to Broadway stardom and Moore is her cook and housemaid: one becomes the embodiment of soul-shrivelling success, the other the repository of spiritual virtue. Sirk's changes make the material even *more* melodramatic and sentimental. Although he strews little jokes along the way (like planting the ironic title "Happiness" on one of Turner's hit shows), mostly he gluts the soap opera with pathos while winking at the intelligentsia.—M.S. (A Different Light Bookstore; Nov. 3.)

THE MAN I LOVE (1947)—Of its kind, not bad at all. Warner Brothers, combining two genres in the hope of snaring a double audience, put together several of these musical melodramas, and this one, directed by Raoul Walsh, is one of the smoothest. Ida Lupino starred, as a singer, with Bruce Bennett as a jazz musician (one of his few good roles). The score includes a whole raft of classics.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 3.)

NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959)—One of Alfred Hitchcock's most entertaining American thrillers. It goes on too long, and the script seems shaped to accommodate various set pieces (such as the chase on Mount Rushmore) that he wants to put in. But it has a classic sequence, in which a crop-dusting plane tries to dust the hero (Cary

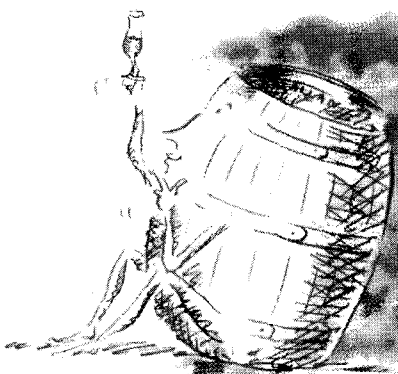


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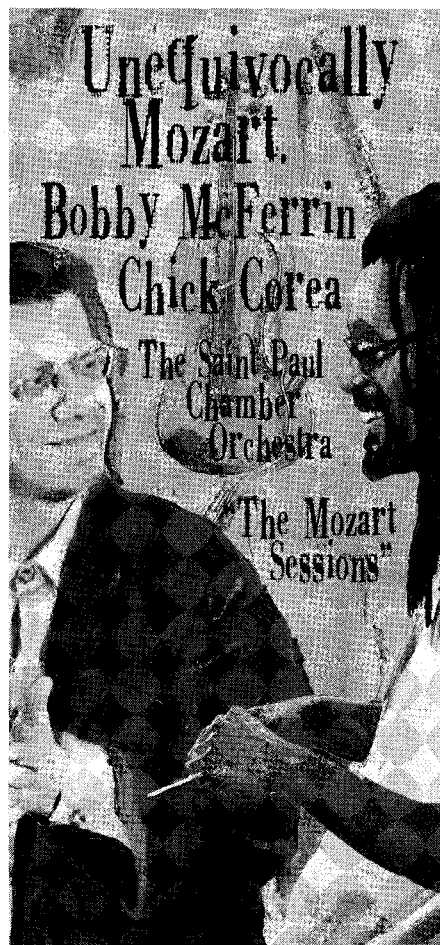
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Grant), and a genial, sophisticated, comic tone. Just about everybody in it is a spy or a government agent (except Grant, who is mistaken for one). His performance is very smooth and appealing, and he looks so fit that he gets by with having Jessie Royce Landis, who was born the same year he was, playing his mother. The heroine is Eva Marie Saint. With James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, and Martin Landau.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting Nov. 1.)

SINCE YOU WENT AWAY (1944)—David O. Selznick must have had a reverent desire to do for the American home front what Hollywood had already done for the British home front in "Mrs. Miniver"—that is, to package a "typical" genteel home in a wishful, postcard version. He wrote the script himself, intending his story to be moving and simple, along epic lines; the result, a self-righteous two-hour-and-fifty-one-minute salute to idealized American middle-class values, is pedestrian in a peculiarly grandiose manner. Claudette Colbert is the mother of the family, Neil Hamilton is her husband, Jennifer Jones and Shirley Temple are her daughters. John Cromwell directed.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art, Oct. 31.)

VERTIGO (1958)—The new print of the ultimate cult movie—Hitchcock's voluptuous exploration of *l'amour fou*—gives the original musical tracks a state-of-the-art presentation that extracts previously hidden undertones and highlights from Bernard Herrmann's brilliant score. With soaring visual eloquence, Hitchcock takes voyeurism and amorous fixation to audacious, almost necrophiliac lengths in this tale of a retired San Francisco police detective (James Stewart) investigating an acquaintance's wife (Kim Novak) to find out whether she is spiritually possessed. Despite its mishapen form, the movie is hypnotic and gloriously operatic—not a conventional masterpiece but an auteur classic, flooded with the Master's erotic and moral obsessions. Alec Coppel and Samuel Taylor wrote the script, from the novel "D'Entre les Morts," by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. The movie, too, has been revived from death, thanks to the restoration team of Robert A. Harris and James C. Katz, who have given it a clarity and lustre that it's lacked for thirty-eight years.—M.S. (Ziegfeld.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Oct. 31: "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor), with Rita Hayworth and Glenn Ford. . . . From Nov. 1 (except Nov. 4): "North by Northwest" (†). . . . Nov. 4 only: "Regeneration" (1915, Raoul Walsh; silent).
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Films starring Claudette Colbert. Oct. 31 at 2: "Since You Went Away" (†). . . . Oct. 31 at 6: "Zaza" (1939, George Cukor). . . . Oct. 31 at 8: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra). . . .
† Oct. 31 at 3 and 6: "W. E. B. DuBois—A Biography in Four Voices" (1996, Louis Masliah). . . .
† A program of films directed by Dusan Hanak; most in Slovak. Nov. 1 at 3 and Nov. 5 at 6: "Rosy Dreams" (1976). . . . Nov. 1 at 6: "Paper Heads" (1995). . . . Nov. 1 at 8 and Nov. 5 at 3: "322" (1969). . . . Nov. 2 at 2:30: "Private Lives" (1990). . . . Nov. 2 at 5: "Pictures of the Old World" (1972). . . . Nov. 3 at 2:30: "I Love, You Love" (1980). . . . Nov. 3 at 5: "Quiet Joy" (1985). . . .
† A program of films written by, directed by, starring, or about Jean-Pierre Melville; all in French, with English subtitles. Nov. 1 at 6 and Nov. 3 at 5: "Doulos—The Finger Man" (†). . . . Nov. 1 at 8 and Nov. 5 at 6: "Two Men in Manhattan" (1958). . . . Nov. 2-3 at noon: "Jean-Pierre Melville: Portrait in 9 Poses" (1970, André Labarthe). . . . Nov. 2 at 2 and Nov. 4 at 6: "The Silence of the Sea" (1947). . . . Nov. 2 at 5 and Nov. 4 at 2:30: "Les Enfants Terribles" (1949). . . . Nov. 3 at 2: "Léon Morin, Priest" (1961). . . . Nov. 5 at 2:30: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955).
WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Films directed by Russian women; in Russian, with English subtitles. Oct. 30 at 2: "Wings"



At the American Museum of the Moving Image, films directed by, or starring, Ida Lupino.

(1966, Larisa Shepitko). . . . Oct. 30 at 4 and 8: "Tough Kids" (1983, Dinara Asanova). . . . Oct. 30 at 6:15: "Brief Encounters" (1967, Kira Muratova). . . . Oct. 31 at 2, 6, and 8:50: "The Asthenic Syndrome" (1989, Muratova). . . .
† A program of films from Arab countries. Nov. 1 at 2 and Nov. 5 at 4:30 and 9: "Determination" (1939, Kamal Salim; Egypt). . . . Nov. 1 at 4:15 and Nov. 4 at 4:15 and 8:30: "Fool's Alley" (1955, Tewfiq Saleh; Egypt). . . . Nov. 1 at 6:45 and Nov. 3 at 2: "The Beginning and the End" (1960, Salah Abou Self; Egypt). . . . Nov. 1 at 9:30: "Omar Gatlato" (1977, Merzak Allouche; Algeria). . . . Nov. 2 at 5 and Nov. 3 at 9: "The Flirtation of Girls" (1949, Anwar Wagdi; Egypt). . . . Nov. 2 at 7:15 and Nov. 4 at 2 and 6:15: "A Summer in La Goulette" (1995, Ferid Boughedir; Tunisia). . . . Nov. 2 at 9:30: "Stars in Broad Daylight" (1988, Usama Muhammad; Syria). . . . Nov. 3 at 4:30: "Kit Kat" (1991, Daoud Abd al-Sayyid; Egypt). . . . Nov. 3 at 7: "Nah'la" (1979, Farouk Beloufa; Algeria). . . . Nov. 5 at 2 and 6:40: "The Land" (1970, Youssef Chahine; Egypt).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by, or starring, Ida Lupino. Nov. 2 at 2: "Hard, Fast and Beautiful" (†). . . . Nov. 2 at 4: "The Hard Way" (1942, Vincent Sherman). . . . Nov. 3 at 2: "Not Wanted" (1949). . . . Nov. 3 at 4:30: "The Man I Love" (†).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Nov. 5 at 7: "Close Encounters of the Third Kind: The Special Edition" (1977, Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss. . . . Nov. 5 at 9:45: "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (1976, Nicolas Roeg), with David Bowie.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 3 at 7, the feature will be "Imitation of Life" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Nov. 5 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Ma Saison Préférée" (1993, André Téchiné; in French), with Catherine Deneuve and Daniel Auteuil.

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

PASSION FOR FASHION

E-MAIL from a friend who lives near the new Giorgio Armani store on Madison Avenue:

Lately, the *Times* has been telling me that fashion is dead. I'm devastated. I spend all this money on a brown Gucci suit and a new pair of Manolo Blahniks, and then I find out that the rest of the female population have chucked all that and moved on to a better, more "relaxed reality" of "casual comfort," in which they wear "multiple end-use" ensembles consisting primarily of jeans, chenille sweaters, and workout gear. Preferring "experiences to outfits," they are taking "adventure trips," driving "sport utility vehicles," and reaching fulfillment by reading "The Celestine Prophecy" and burning vanilla-scented candles. According to the newspaper of record, fashion may be not only "finished"; it is unlikely ever to be resurrected, having moved to "the outer nebulae of women's lives."

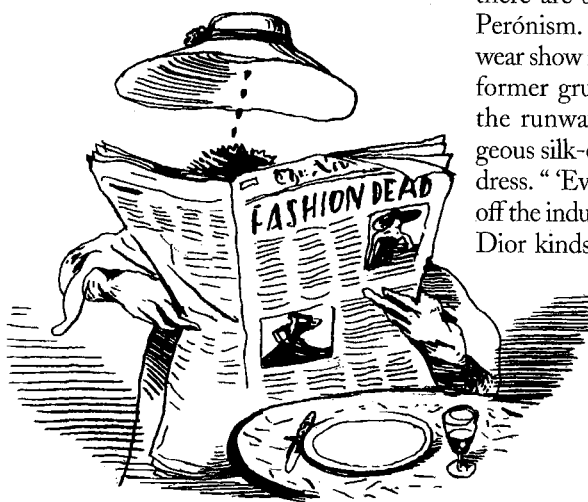
Pretty alarming stuff. So I did what I always do when I get alarmed. I hit the phones. I started with a couple of hotshots in the business. "I really think the *Times* is being rather frivolous," Kal Ruttenstein, the senior vice-president for fashion direction at Bloomingdale's, said. Bill Blass, the designer, said jokingly that he thought there might be "a conspiracy at the *Times* to kill fashion." Then he said, "Or maybe it's a strategy." He was referring to the time that Halston didn't like his coverage in *Women's Wear Daily*, and took out even more ad space.

Maybe I should admire the lunatic bravery of a newspaper that does a demolition job on one of the city's biggest industries (and one of its own biggest advertisers). So far, there's been a front-page, two-part series on the subject, plus a follow-up in the "Week in Review"

section, plus a line or two in just about every fashion-related piece I've seen in the paper recently. But I don't buy what the Gray Lady is telling us. I mean, the *Times* is basing its reports almost entirely on interviews with forty women and a single statistic: that sales of women's apparel have fallen twelve per cent, from the record eighty-four billion dollars in 1989 to seventy-three billion dollars last year. The *Times* cited the source of these figures as a market-research firm called Tactical Retail Solutions, so I called its president, Isaac Lagnado. He provided several interesting points of amplification. First, he emphasized, the "record high" came during the most "aggressive" shopping-center growth in history (between 1980 and today, the nation's retail space has almost doubled). Then he pointed out that even in 1985 (in the middle of the roaring eighties) sales were only about seventy-seven billion dollars—that the real contraction occurred in "mainstream apparel" (read "downmarket") stores like K mart and Bradlees, and specialty stores like Casual Corner. Merchandise in these stores is inspired by designers, and when designers are doing deconstruction and grunge,

as they were in the early nineties, it does not, Lagnado said, "trickle down" well. He added that since there had been no substantive change in silhouette, color, or hemline the "mainstream shopper" had not felt moved to replenish her wardrobe before her clothes wore out. Then his voice brightened. Sales are up, he told me, and "innovators" like Gucci are being knocked off and are trickling down. He predicted a strong fourth quarter and "a much, much better Christmas" than last year.

What really drives me crazy about the *Times* articles is the implication that if fashion really were dead we'd all be better off—that women who like to put on a suit and heels to greet the day are airheads, unlike those paragons running around in multiple end-use outfits. "I used to use clothing to define me," said one of the *Times's* Forty. "Now I know a little better who I am." Good for her, but what if you'd like to be somebody else? If it weren't for the wannabe factor, there would never have been Jackie O sunglasses or a picture of Audrey Hepburn tacked up on my bulletin board. Now that Madonna is about to open in "Evita" there are signs of some serious fashion Perónism. At Chanel's recent ready-to-wear show in Paris, Karl Lagerfeld sent the former grunge queen Kate Moss down the runway in a blond wig and a gorgeous silk-organza "demi-longueur" party dress. "Evita" is going to knock the socks off the industry," Bill Blass told me. "Those Dior kinds of clothes are going to make a big comeback. I'm talking about the masses now."



STILL clutching the phone, I decided to do a little polling of my own. I called a friend of mine who, as it happened, had just bought a

cream Tahari suit. She's getting a doctorate in divinity at an Episcopal theological seminary and she's basically penniless, but she's terrified of letting herself go. "If anything, I work harder to try and make myself look good on a low budget," she said. Once a year, she allows herself a splurge. Last year, it was a black crêpe swing dress at Barneys and some Chanel-knockoff high-heeled Mary Janes. "I will never forget that day," she said. "I'd spent every day for two years going to church three times a day, and I was really happy doing all that. But, believe me, it was an incredible boost to go out and buy a new outfit and then have people go 'You look fantastic!'" She recalled walking down a street in Paris some years ago in her first—and only—Dior suit. A man turned to stare, got tangled up in his dog's leash, and fell flat on his face. Now, you can burn all the vanilla-scented candles in the world, but unless they have a hex on them they'll never have the same effect. A male friend of mine who just acquired a homburg told me that when he wears it he feels as though he's got a loaded gun in his pocket. I've never carried a gun, but I know what he means. When I've got on my black wool-and-satin Blass evening suit and my five-and-a-half-inch Manolo mules, there isn't a room in the world I can't walk through. Gale Hayman, the Giorgio Beverly Hills co-founder and cosmetics queen, says in her new book "How Do I Look?" that you're only really looking good if you don't mind running into your worst enemy on the street. I have hidden around enough corners to know exactly what she's talking about. "Women would go crazy without their armor," Donna Karan said recently.

For a lot of us, putting on our armor is the most creative act of an otherwise humdrum day. During my morning of polling, I called another friend, a banker, at her office in Chicago. She said she was wearing a shawl-collared navy dress, navy suède pumps, and an Hermès scarf ("my present to myself"). Another friend, a personal assistant to a news anchor in New York, had on a black Mizrahi shirt dress with huge cuffs and a wide belt ("I love to wear dresses to work"). My cousin the real-estate agent had on a CK Calvin Klein pants suit. The only woman I talked to who was not "dressed" owns a marine-supply business on the Mississippi River. She said that, as usual, she was wearing the same blue pants and striped workshirt with her company's name embroidered

above the pocket as the guys who work for her. I asked what her secretary had on. "Skirt, jacket, heels. Probably from Sears." And then she told me about a woman in Accounts Receivable: "She has on adorable Chinese silk pants and a tunic. I think the silk is actually polyester, but she looks great." Think about it. This woman has on an adorable silk-looking outfit while working in a metal building on the edge of a port in a town of forty-seven thousand people in an office where nobody sees her. Hey, *Times*—multiple-end-use *that*.

SOONER or later, one of those *Times* articles reported, American women are going to progress beyond the current enlightened-chenille-sweater stage to an even more utilitarian "stain-proof, wrinkle-free, machine-washable outfit" that will cool you down when you're warm and warm you up when you're cold and protect you against ultraviolet rays. Right; and they told us years ago that by now we'd be eating freeze-dried kelp made of recycled Styrofoam and driving electric cars. No one will ever convince me that some kind of Teflon-coated wrinkle-free getup will replace the crush of real linen or the rustle of real silk, a gracefully curving neckline or an elongating cut. These are the things that make our spirits soar. These are the things that get us out of the house ready to meet the enemy.

FOLLOWING THE SCORE

LAST week, as the Yankees scrapped their way through their first World Series in fifteen years, baseball swelled up from the substratum where it usually dwells to disrupt the lives and routines of thousands of New Yorkers. Commuters hurrying through Grand Central Terminal suddenly changed their plans and lingered at the pair of giant televisions set up on the main concourse. Dinner guests murmured polite apologies as they pushed back from the table, once again, for a quick dash to the den. Adjusting to the World Series schedule became a drama of its own; and nobody had to make more feverish adaptations than Marvin Hamlisch, pianist, conductor, and diehard Bombers fan since the age of five.

"When the Yankees got into the Series, I was looking at my calendar and I

thought, 'Oh, my God, I'm in trouble,'" Hamlisch said in a phone conversation held between Games Four and Five. Hamlisch is the conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops, and he realized that throughout the series he would be wielding a baton out of town, rather than a channel selector in his living room. Of course, he could always check on the game between pieces, but the interval would be unbearable. "I had to devise a way to check in during the show," Hamlisch said.

"I bought myself a beeper, which gives you sports scores, the market, CNN, and so on. But you can't have it go *beep* during the concert, so I had the beeper deactivated." Hamlisch



Marvin Hamlisch

worked out a set of moves smooth enough to make Yankee shortstop Derek Jeter proud. Before each piece, Hamlisch placed the beeper on the lectern, where it sat next to the music as he performed. "What you do is, just as the audience is applauding, before you turn around, you push a button and you can see the game's score, and then you take your bow," he explained. "I had the ability to more or less continuously know what the score was."

Hamlisch is the kind of baseball nut who once paid serious money to attend a Yankee fantasy camp in Orlando, Florida, where he lined a single off the ex-great Whitey Ford. During Game Three, when the Yankees were desperately clinging to their first lead, Hamlisch was, he recalled, "going crazy." Did it affect his conducting? It did not, Hamlisch says proudly. "The Way We Were" stayed a ballad. I did not make it go fast. When you're up on the stage, you're conducting. And when you look at the beeper you're a fan."

PUTTING IT ON

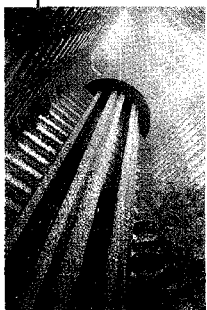
TWO weeks before the unfurling of last Thursday's "VH1 Fashion Awards" extravaganza in Madison Square Garden—a show that was telecast to fifty million people on Friday—the event's creators thought they had almost everything set, or, as some of them put it, "the rubber was hitting the road." Nevertheless,

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they were still, they said, "smiling and dialling" as they booked hosts, presenters, and musical talent (the Bee Gees, David Bowie, Toni Braxton, Bryan Adams, and Garbage, among others). They had amassed old movie stills and video clips. They were working on videos, parody films, and comic-bit inserts. They had enlisted experienced supermodels and models, and even a few young, unknown models—the "piccolinos." And from the leading designers, foreign and domestic, they had accumulated clothes for the models to wear. The creators had plans to usurp a



Iman & David Bowie

big section of seats and replace them with a nontraditional, curving runway stretching into the audience. In addition to employing the services of a VH1 executive producer, a producer, and a fashion consultant, they had hired a French "fashion director" and brought in, from California, an experienced television-awards-show producer, along with an experienced television director. They planned to honor fifty nominees in ten categories, selected by a hundred and fifty fashion and music professionals. Their budget was in place: two million dollars for production and two million for advertising and tradeouts. Six sponsors—B.M.W., Clairol, Sprint, Hanes Hosiery, Blistex, and Lee Jeans—were in the bag. The advertising hype was flowing through the usual channels.

Joel Gallen, the blue-denim-and-boot-clad producer from California, was nervous but confident as he conferred with three writers about what the hosts, the presenters, and the comic actors should say. "I always worked this way at school," he said frenetically, in an office at VH1's Times Square headquarters. His glasses were silver-rimmed; his conversational rhythm was computer-mogul speedy, in time with a sidewise kneemarching motion he executed while seated. "I always pulled, like, all-nighters at school," he said. "Everything at the last minute. Don't tell my mother."

The VH1 producer Dan Appel, an undernourished Brad Pitt look-alike, with a tiny pair of silver hoops in his left ear, said, "Last year, our Fashion Awards show—our first—was more on the classic side. Too broad. We got criticized by the industry. They complained about the bad ventilation, about bad seats. Everyone wanted to sit front-row center. For this show, we're making a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. We have half again as many seats. Potentially, it's a pretty heavy show. It will be sexier. Sexier and edgier. Last year, the audience sat on their hands. They didn't clap. Fashion people never clap."

Alexandre De Betak, the fashion director, who was small, compact, and garbed in pinstripes, and who had an intimidating and authoritative French accent, said that the untraditional runway would help create a lot of energy for the new show. "A fashion show is all about building energy," he said, as though he were making a Sartre-like pronouncement.

"Everyone says that fashion is an industry that eats its young," said Gabé Doppelt, the resident fashion expert, who is a sort of valiantly cheerful, modishly dressed, size-2 waif, with child-thin arms, a hoarse voice, an English accent, and an obliging laugh. "They may not clap, but we'll put kids in the pit—the Fashion Institute kids and younger, some of them wearing funny face masks—and the camera will show them clapping and yelling and waving their arms and having fun."

Jean-Paul Gaultier had been asked to design the new award statuette for the show, but "he didn't have much time," Gabé Doppelt said. "He suggested designing a penis with a fragrance—a rival's fragrance—coming out of it. So Versace agreed to design the award. He made an angular robot holding an angular guitar. It's smashing."

"It's edgy," Dan Appel said.

Joel Gallen said that he had been counting on getting Roseanne to be the host, with Isaac Mizrahi as co-host. "Now Roseanne is having second thoughts. It's become very stressful to me."

Gabé reported that Isaac Mizrahi was in Paris, and she couldn't reach him. On the positive side, she had collected at least thirty old Halston dresses, to be worn by models in a tribute to Halston, the late designer, who was big in the nineteen-seventies. "Iman will introduce it," Gabé said.

"Will Iman walk?" Dan asked.

"She says she hasn't walked in seven years," Gabé said.

"Is she, like, adamant?" Joel asked.

"I'll ask her again," Gabé said.

In his office, Joel studied a large bulletin board with different-colored name tabs arranged in the prospective order of the show's elements. "Ashley Judd said she would be a presenter, but she wouldn't do it except with Armani," he said. "But Armani can't do it, so we offered her Herb Ritts, and we just heard she'll take Herb Ritts—for Most Stylish Music Video. Elizabeth Hurley was locked in to present Photographer of the Year with Versace, but we just got a really big movie star, Dennis Hopper, so we're blowing off Versace for Dennis Hopper. We're making our own little three-minute films—parodies, very funny stuff—to screen during the show."

Seventy-two hours later, Joel was talking faster than ever, and his body was keeping pace. "We have RuPaul to present Female Model of the Year." (Nominees: Kate Moss, Carolyn Murphy, Stella Tennant, Amber Valletta, Guinevere Van Seenus.) "But the joke will be that we won't put anybody with her—I mean him. We had Stephanie Seymour and Antonio Sabato, Jr."—the Victoria's Secret supermodel and the Calvin Klein underwear model—"as presenters of Best Second Collection." (Nominees: CK, DKNY, Isaac, Miu Miu, Versus.) "But



Heather Locklear

there's a chance we'll get Jimmy Smits, so if we get Jimmy Smits we blow off Antonio Sabato, Jr. We'll give him something else. Bryan Adams was supposed to sing 'The Only Thing That Looks Good on Me Is You.' Suddenly I hear he's not coming. I was so depressed. Now I hear he is, thank God, coming. I'd like to put Claudia Schiffer with Jon Lovitz to present Male Model of the Year." (Nominees: Jason Lewis, Alex Lundqvist, Jason Shaw, Mark Vanderloo, Johnny Zander.) "But Claudia Schiffer won't say whether she will come. David Bowie just told us he's giving us two songs—'Fashion' and a brand new one, in its début, 'Little Wonder.' I'd like to put Linda Evangelista as a presenter with Isaac. Isaac we know loves Linda, but we still can't reach

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Isaac. With Roseanne and Isaac out as hosts, we're going for Heather Locklear."

Forty-eight hours later, Joel was ecstatic. "We've got a host!" he said. "Heather Locklear. She's better than Roseanne. Besides, she's married to Richie Sambora, who's with Bon Jovi—a real rock star. And all Heather wants is three tickets to 'Rent.'"

"Everything's changing," Joel said.

"Everything will continue to change until the last day, as the heat builds," Gabé said.

As the heat built, Gabé made arrangements to fly to Los Angeles for a day, bringing dozens of dresses by assorted designers so that Heather Locklear could select what she would wear. In twenty-four hours, Gabé returned, sparkling with excitement over the chosen host. "She's *tiny*, like a Coca-Cola bottle," Gabé said. She added that she had bad news and good news from Isaac Mizrahi. He couldn't be a host, but he *might* present with Linda Evangelista, and he definitely *promised* to make something new for Heather to wear. Naomi Campbell telephoned Joel to say she had to go to South America on a photo shoot, so he dropped giving her a special award and decided to give one instead to Linda Evangelista, because "Linda pioneered the supermodels." Gabé approved. "Linda is a chameleon. She's changed her look so many times,



Gianni Versace

and she's gone all over the world collecting awards. She's logged more miles than Warren Christopher." Lauren Zalaznick, the executive producer of the show, who had been busy dealing with what she said was "the nightmare of tickets," sternly protested to Joel that all the film parodies were about men. The ticket nightmare became more nightmarish. It turned out that a high executive of VH1 had "over-invited by two hundred," and the producers were unable to do anything about it. Versace had twenty-five tickets but needed twenty-five more. The producers couldn't do anything about that, either. Then Dan found that Barry Diller and Diane von Furstenberg had been allotted "crappy seats," and nobody knew what to do about *that*.

Four days before the show, all its cre-

DISARMED

VISITING the splendid "Henri Cartier-Bresson in America 1935-1975" show at the Equitable (through November 2nd) brought back for me some brief but still vivid moments spent with the Magnum grand master forty years ago. He was not just the most revered but the most enjoyed member of that celebrated entourage of photographers—Robert Capa, Chim Seymour, and Elliott Erwitt were some of the others—whose work was repeatedly featured in *Holiday*, where I was a young editor, and whenever he turned up at the office, a diminutive, monkish-looking gent, with smile and Leica at the ready, he was received with complimentary disrespect. "Hank!" cried our art director, Frank Zachary. "Hank Carter! Got the snaps, Hank?"

It was Zachary's notion that the suave and cosmopolitan C.-B., a Parisian to the core, would respond happily to being treated like an aspiring night-beat news photog with a big-circulation American daily, and even proposed to him that he should go everywhere wearing a porkpie hat with a "Press" placard stuck in the hatband, just like in the movies. "Oh, Franghank!" Cartier-Bresson protested. He was laughing. "Got the snaps"—you are . . . you are exceptionale! Always, of course, he did have the snaps, and then some, and when we took him out to lunch he would sometimes swiftly lift the Leica, barely pausing in midstride or midsentence, and catch another one—a passing dog or grand dame, a delivery boy across the street with his face at that instant lifted toward the sun—that the rest of us had never noticed.

His cameras were not in evidence on a day when Frank and I called on him and his wife, Eli, in their apartment on the Rue de Lisbonne, in June of 1956. I remember their warmth and charm but nothing else about the day except for a heavy, exotic-looking dagger with a curvy double edge that lay on top

of a sideboard, its elaborately chased blade catching gleams of sunlight. When I approached for a closer look, Cartier-Bresson and his wife said, in one voice, "Be careful!"

Seeing my surprise, he explained that the knife was a Malayan kris, and that the dark sheen along its blade was probably poison. "I don't want it to cut you," he said.

"I wasn't going to touch it," I said. I felt like a reprimanded child.

"He means it will cut you if it wants to," Eli said. She herself was Balinese, strikingly so, and again I stopped in my tracks. She

spread her hands in distress and said to her husband, "Can we tell Roger why it's out on the table like this?"

"Yes," Cartier-Bresson said gravely. "Normally, in the everyday, the kris rests in this drawer, here below, but now and then it asks to get out."

"It asks?" I asked.

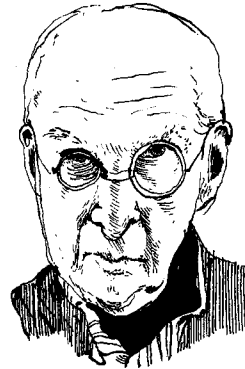
"It knocks," he said, rapping a double rap with his knuckles on the sideboard. "And when it asks again we take it out and put it just here for a few days."

I don't think I laughed. I said nothing, and Cartier-Bresson, anxious to put me at my ease again, gestured apologetically and remarked that belief or superstition, call it what you wish, was everywhere. "After all," he murmured, "there are thousands or millions of Frenchmen walking around with a bit of butcher's string tied around their waist to ward off the *mal au foie*, the liver disease that we French keep as an obsession."

A suspicion occurred. "Henri," I said. "Forgive me, but do you have a piece of string tied around your waist?"

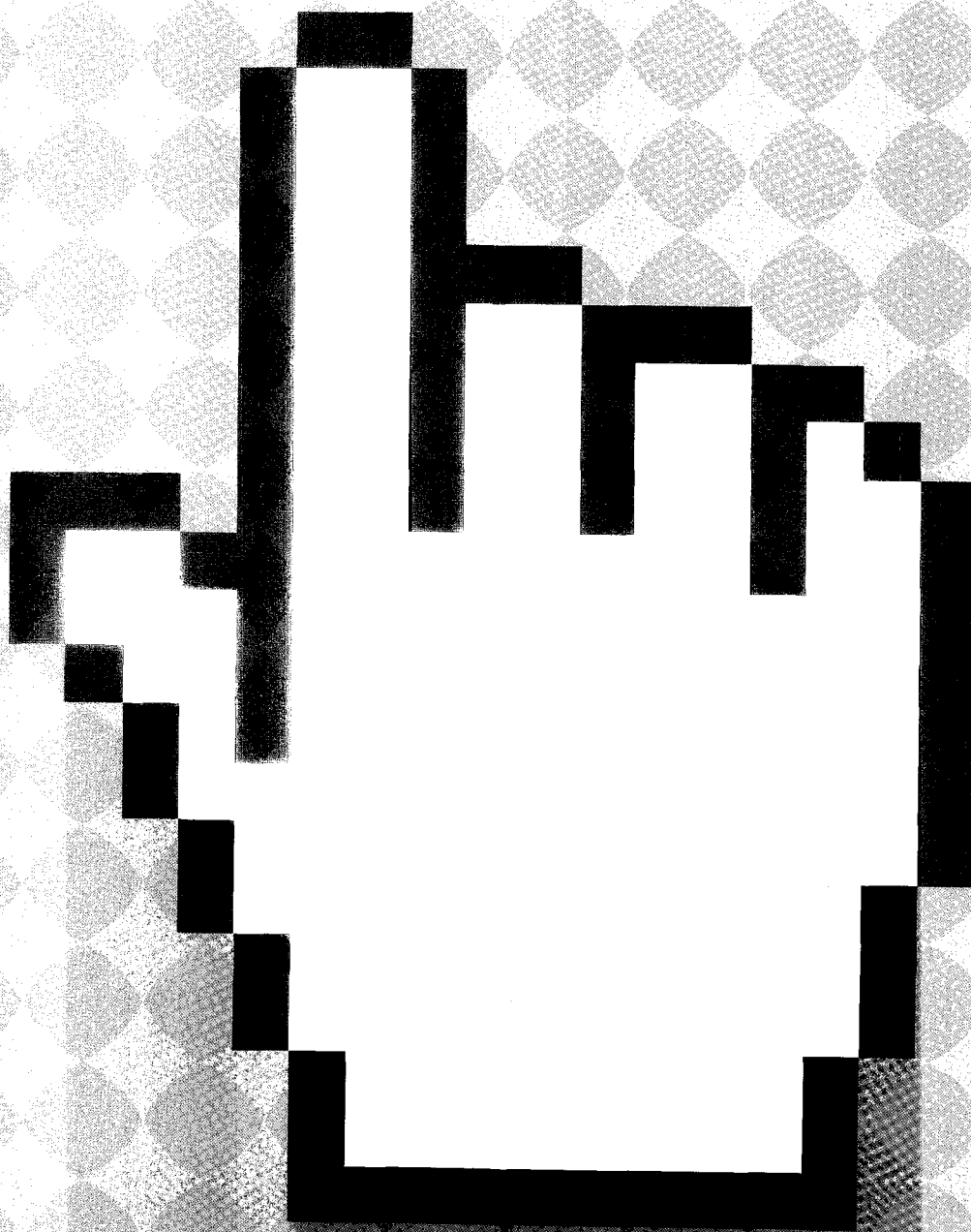
Smiling and shrugging, exuding an interested excitement that was close to pride, he unbuttoned the bottom two buttons of his shirt and revealed a snowy *ficelle* just inside his waistband, neatly double-tied. He looked like a rolled roast, a genius ready for the broiler.

"So far," he said carefully, "it has done its work." —ROGER ANGELL



Henri Cartier-Bresson

is
n



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ators were ensconced in large trailers parked on West Thirty-first Street outside Madison Square Garden. Everything had been moved there, including Joel's bulletin board. The colored tabs revealed more changes: Antonio Sabato, Jr., had been shifted over to the supermodel Helena Christensen to present the award for Best Personal Style—Male (Nominees: George Clooney, David Letterman, Brad Pitt, Dennis Rodman, Will Smith). Naomi Campbell had sent word that she might make it to the show after all, so now the producers were trying to figure out how to fit her in. Kate Moss was coming, but only to walk in a Versace parade while Bryan Adams sang: the rest of the time she wanted to sit—and be televised—in the audience. De Betak said that Kate Moss must not sit in the audience, because then the other supermodels would want to sit in the audience, too, and places would have to be found for them. Jean-Paul Gaultier sent word that he was going to come onstage wearing a dress—one of his own—to introduce Garbage.

Via telephone, Joel worked with the actor David Spade on thirty-second film-bit fillers showing Spade calling



RuPaul

up supermodels and leaving voice-mail messages arranging day-dream dates with them. "I think I'm feeling relaxed," Joel reported. De Betak reported that he still couldn't find enough energy on the runway. One of Gabé's assistants, a supremely glamorous French fashion stylist named Carlyne Cerf de Dudzele (she was wearing black-and-white Chanel sneakers, which she had taken directly off the feet of a Chanel model in a recent Paris-collection show) said that something had to be done to insure good seats for Manolo Blahnik, because last year Manolo Blahnik had been placed way up in *le poulailler*—the chicken-roost seats.

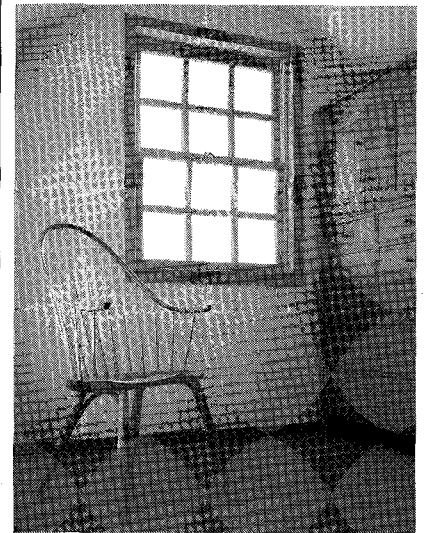
Twenty hours before the show, Joel was in the trailer, talking about music. He had watched rehearsals onstage of the Bee Gees ("Still great, impressive, they can still do the falsetto thing") and David Bowie ("Unbelievable. Even the jaded

fashion world will be amazed"). Joel said, "Claudia Schiffer is here. I told her she would like Jon Lovitz. She did. Their chemistry together is incredible. But they're rewriting what we gave them to say. I'm a little stressed."

By ten minutes to five, when the theatre doors were scheduled to open, the show's creators had started looking a bit punchy. Joel, Dan, Lauren, Gabé, and Bruce Gowers, the show's director, with assistants, were near the trailers, in the mobile video-production truck. Various bits of news, most of them bad, kept coming to them. The Bee Gees' guitars couldn't be found backstage. The Versace people were saying that the models were more important than Bryan Adams, who was competing with the runway. The kids in the pit looked lackadaisical and had to be coached into hyperactivity. The stand mike for Heather was not working; a lavalier mike pinned to her dress didn't have enough dress to pin onto. Salt was sick at home in bed with a temperature of 103°, so Pepa was left alone to present with Dolce & Gabbana.

Showtime. In the truck, Bruce directed, calling out the shots, rocking and carrying on in body language literally like a rapper's. (He lost four pounds in two hours.) In the program, Antonio Sabato, Jr., and Helena Christensen presented the award for Best Personal Style—Male to Dennis Rodman. Elizabeth Hurley and Dennis Hopper presented the award for Womenswear Designer of the Year to Tom Ford for Gucci. The creators came up with a Role Model Award as a last-minute special-award name for Linda Evangelista. Anna Wintour, the editor of *Vogue*, who was slated to present the award, disappeared, so the show was held up for a few minutes until she was found and came through. Jean-Paul Gaultier, wearing not a dress but one of his own redingotes, introduced Garbage. "Everybody is clapping, *clapping!*" Joel reported, dazed. Claudia Schiffer and Jon Lovitz made their "chemistry" apparent in presenting VH1's Viewers' Choice award to Elton John as Most Fashionable Artist. Elton John accepted, saying, "Fashion is about people who have got the balls to make a difference." ♦

"Passion for Fashion," Julia Reed; "Following the Score," James Traub; "Putting It On," Lillian Ross.



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THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL



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*What happened when the press tried to get high-minded?
It fudged the most clear-cut race in the country.*

BY MICHAEL KELLY

LAST Tuesday, Jesse Helms, who is seeking election this year to his fifth term in the Senate, took a little campaign swing through the lovely Great Smoky Mountains country of

paper he pulled out of his blazer pocket.

The main point of the speech was that America is in a state of moral crisis. "Everywhere I have been today and yesterday, people said 'What do you think



A North Carolina media consortium has been exposed as a fraud by the collision between the theory of "civic journalism" and Jesse Helms.

western North Carolina. Travelling light, with a few aides and some local volunteers in a big blue-and-gray bus, Helms made his unhurried way from one small mountain town to another. In Waynesville, Helms spoke in the parking lot of the Haywood Square shopping mall, in front of the Balloons 'n Blooms store. The Senator's bus arrived at 12:45 P.M., about fifteen minutes late, and stopped right behind a little stage that had been set up for him. The door opened, and out popped Helms, smiling and looking dapper in a blue blazer, a white shirt, and tan slacks. He mounted the small stage slowly and a little unsteadily—he is seventy-five years old and looks frailer in person than on television—and delivered a fifteen-minute speech, in which he was occasionally obliged to refer to reminders written on a piece of

is the most important issue before America today?' and I have told them that without any question in my mind it is the restoration of the moral character of America, and reversing the fall in spiritual values in America," Helms said. The secondary thrust of the speech was an attack on big government spending: "All of these people with new ideas, don't you know, but they're the oldest ideas in the socialist book—give away other people's money." This was all vintage Helms, but all pretty mild, by Helms standards. The crowd of mostly older people greeted the Senator's words with enthusiasm, but it was a small crowd. There were only a few journalists covering the event—a couple of local newspaper reporters and photographers, a television reporter from Asheville, and one big-city reporter, John Monk, of the

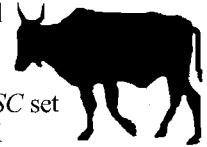
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Charlotte *Observer*. The reporters tried to ask Helms a couple of questions, but he ignored them, and they soon quit trying.

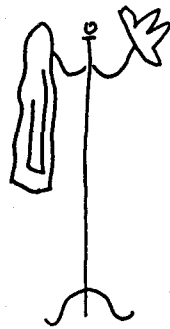
The next day, Harvey Gantt was campaigning in Charlotte. In the morning, he went to a community center to talk to another group of elderly voters. Gantt is an affably good-looking black man with a winning smile, and he is attractive on the stump. He gave a carefully crafted speech. Apart from a few mild jokes, it was a vigorous attack on Helms over a set of economic-populist pocketbook issues that Gantt hopes will move a majority of North Carolina voters to choose him: Helms's record of not supporting Social Security, his votes to curb the growth of Medicare spending, his votes against increases in the minimum wage, and so on. Gantt spoke of seeing, on his trips to the drugstore to buy medicine for his arthritis, "people literally trying to make a choice between getting prescription drugs and eating—food or medicine." He accused Helms of "conspiring with drug companies and others to increase the cost of drugs" and depicted him as an out-of-touch, uncaring autocrat, "who has thumbed his nose at the entire public."

As was the case with Helms in Waynesville, Gantt's crowd was enthusiastic but small. And again there was a notable absence of media. The Charlotte *Observer* was there, this time in the form of the reporter Jim Morrill. Also present were an Associated Press reporter and photographer and a radio reporter. No television stations showed up.

THE Helms-Gantt race is among the closer Senate contests this year, and among the most important. Helms is one of the great polarizing figures of politics, the Teddy Kennedy of the right, a no-apologies ideologue whose very presence in the Senate is a cause of rejoicing on one side and despair on the other. The choice before the North Carolina voters could not be more stark: Helms is white, Gantt is black; Helms is anathema to black voters, feminists, and homosexual political activists; Gantt is a civil-rights pioneer who is heavily supported by the organized interest groups of the Democratic Party, but who also was twice elected mayor of Char-

lotte, a largely white, fairly conservative Southern city. Helms is a right-winger of the old school; Gantt, though he has adopted some New Democrat rhetoric on crime and responsibility, is fundamentally liberal. In 1990, Gantt lost to Helms in a bitterly fought contest in which race played a significant role. You would expect their rematch to be pretty hot stuff—the candidates slinging mud and raw meat, the press egging them on, the happily appalled public thronging to witness the ugliness of it all. Instead, there are the scenes of last week—the candidates muted, the press disengaged, the public looking elsewhere for its entertainment. What is going on here is an example of the unintended consequence of doing good.

In 1996, the free press of North Carolina—or, at least, a big chunk of it—decided to do something about the sorry state of political campaigns. Impelled by a sentiment that campaigns too often turned on name-calling and the exploitation of hot-button topics such as race,



rather than on the issues voters really cared about, fifteen media organizations—six newspapers, five commercial television channels, three radio stations, and the statewide public-television channel—joined in a consortium to force the candidates in the gubernatorial and senatorial races to discuss the proper issues, properly. This was an idea whose time, it seemed, had come—a great test project of the do-gooding philosophy known variously as "civic journalism" and "public journalism," which is in vogue these days. The Your Voice, Your Vote consortium, as it termed itself, commissioned two polls of a thousand North Carolinians each—one in January, for the primary season, and one in July, for the general election. Respondents were asked to identify the issues on which they felt it was "very important" to know where the candidates stood. For the general election, the list that emerged consisted of Crime and Drugs, Taxes and Spending, Affordable Health Care, and Education. The candidates were invited to sit for three-hour videotaped group interviews, in which they would be grilled on the chosen issues. The interviews formed the basis for a series of shared stories describing the candidates' positions on these issues. Essentially

identical stories ran in all the newspapers, on successive Sundays, and on all the television channels and radio stations.

Much of what Your Voice, Your Vote did was a harmless packaging job—jazzing up the sort of stories that any decent newspaper routinely runs in election season—and some of the project's effects were beneficial. It forced reporters to explain the candidates' records in a more thorough and balanced fashion, and to use more of the candidates' own words. It is also important to note that the project did not preclude the consortium's members from pursuing independent reporting, and they did so. In the Charlotte *Observer*, which co-chaired the consortium, the result was coverage that in some ways was notably superior: a series of unusually thoughtful articles on an array of issues. But at the core of the idea there was always a fraud, and what has happened in the collision between the theory of civic journalism and the reality of Jesse Helms has exposed that fraud.

The fraud was the notion that a self-selected group of reporters and editors somehow could or should determine the fit subjects for debate in an election. The journalists, of course, pointed to their polls to claim that it was the voters who had defined the issues, but that claim falls apart at the slightest examination. First of all, the universe of choices for those polled was limited to a list of issues that the consortium had already selected. And those polled in July identified not four issues on which it was "very important" for them to know how the candidates would act but eight. In addition to the four anointed issues, more than sixty per cent of those polled also considered it "very important" that they be informed about the candidates' positions on Families and Values, the Environment, Race Relations, and Personal Financial Security. In fact, the issue of Families and Values was considered "very important" by seventy-nine per cent of those polled, one point more than Taxes and Spending. But the consortium selected Taxes and Spending over Families and Values as one of the four big issues to put before the voters in the Gantt-Helms race. This was an extraordinary decision. Not only had the public told the consortium that Families and Values was an issue of great concern; it is also the issue that one of the



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candidates in the Senate race most conspicuously runs on.

Jesse Helms campaigns on the sort of values that are covered by this umbrella euphemism—or, at least, on his version of those values. He hates Communism, can't abide a liberal, favors a government so limited that it sometimes seems to consist of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the tobacco-subsidy program; he demands prayer in public schools and regards America as fundamentally a Christian nation; he believes that abortion is murder and that AIDS is the consequence of "deliberate, disgusting, and revolting" conduct; and he argues that affirmative action is a racial spoils system that punishes white people for their skin color. Helms's values have won him an unbroken series of electoral victories since 1972. The consortium in effect decided that this year Helms wasn't running on those values at all but, rather, on the values it approved of.

To sustain this fiction required overlooking a fact of significant size and salience: Helms thought so little of the consortium's selected issues that he, alone among thirteen gubernatorial and senatorial candidates, refused to participate in the requisite group interrogation. The consortium shoehorned him into the project anyway. Different members handled the awkward task in different ways. The *Raleigh News & Observer* told its readers that Helms had refused to play, and ran a blank white space wherever Helms's position on an issue might be expected to appear. But that was blatantly dishonest. Helms's views are readily knowable to the *News & Observer*, through his twenty-four-year public record. The *Charlotte Observer* made strenuous efforts to badger Helms whenever it could reach him for snippets of his views on each question. But that is dishonest, too. Gantt sat through six hours of cross-examination on his views; Helms was able to defend his in sound bites snatched by reporters on the run.

When I asked Rick Thames, the *Observer's* public editor, why the group decided to include Taxes and Spending instead of Families and Values in its list of approved issues, he said that the decision "was pretty much a coin toss," and added that the difference in public interest between the two issues was within the poll's margin of error. When I asked him if it worried him at all that this decision

might have the effect of denying the centrality of Helms's issues in the Helms-Gantt race, he said, "No, it doesn't worry me. It doesn't concern me." He pointed out that any member of the consortium was free to explore the values issues on its own, and that the *Charlotte Observer* was running an article this very weekend on the matter.

THAMES might want to talk to Jim Andrews. Andrews is Harvey Gantt's campaign manager, and his feelings about the impact of the Your Voice, Your Vote project on the Gantt-Helms race are only barely printable. As Andrews sees it, the intended or unintended effect of what he calls "a bunch of crap, just nonsense, just bullshit, absolute bullshit" has been to pretend that the Gantt-Helms race is not about what in fact it is about. "There are serious disagreements here, but all the disagreements are sanitized, everything is put through the washing machine, and it all gets blurred together," he says. "Harvey Gantt is pro-choice. Jesse Helms has sponsored constitutional amendments to ban abortion under all circumstances. Harvey Gantt thinks the government should do more on education. Jesse Helms is a guy who says the federal government has no business in education whatsoever. And so on down the line. And Helms is not a Milquetoast about this. He'll tell you what he's for and what he's against. But they don't want that."

Andrews argues that the consortium's manipulation of the political process has had two large effects on the Gantt-Helms race. The first is to discourage coverage of the race. The paucity of reporters at Gantt's speech last week was the norm. "They simply don't cover the race," Andrews says. "Why should they? They've already decided what the important issues are and what the candidates say about those issues. This allows them to sit back and cover a race from the comfort of an armchair in the newsroom. Instead of covering the real combat of the campaign, they make up the combat in their heads."

The second effect is, perversely, to encourage precisely the sort of race the dogooders wished to avoid—a repeat of the Gantt-Helms race of 1990, which was dominated by harshly negative television commercials. By not declaring "race relations" and "values" official issues, An-

draws argues, the consortium has discouraged the candidates from openly discussing issues like affirmative action. The result: a muted Helms and a careful Gantt on display, with both campaigns blanketing television with demagogic attack ads. In the past few weeks, the Gantt campaign has run advertisements accusing Helms of "voting to cut Medicare benefits, raise Medicare premiums." The Helms campaign, for its part, has run a reprise of the 1990 race commercials; one spot asserts, falsely (according to the *Observer*), that "in 1986 Harvey Gantt used his minority status to purchase interest in a TV station under false pretenses," and later sold the station to a white-owned company, reaping a substantial profit.

"We wanted to have an open argument about race," Andrews says. "If Helms wanted to inject it into the campaign, it was fine with us." But, he said, the sanitizing influence of Your Voice, Your Vote discouraged that kind of open fight: "We were put in a position where we had to go the commercial route, and spend all this money on TV, because that was the only way we could get our story across."

ANDREWS is exaggerating. The real effects of the Your Voice, Your Vote experiment on the North Carolina races of 1996 have been a good deal less dramatic than both its admirers and its critics claim. The project did some limited specific good and some limited specific harm, and it probably won't turn out to have much influenced the outcome of the Helms-Gantt race. Your Voice, Your Vote, though, is still a bad idea. It is anti-democratic—an attempt to increase the power of a journalistic upper class to dictate what are and are not fit subjects for public debate, and what are the proper reasons for choosing one candidate over another. It is an exercise in group-think. It is dishonest, in its attempt to pretend that the press's will represents merely the will of the people, as proved through polls that manipulated both the presentation of the issues and the results of the survey. It is, in fact, such a bad idea that it represents a good argument for the reelection of Jesse Helms: if nothing else, such an outcome would discourage the rest of America's civic journalists from playing Election God again. ♦

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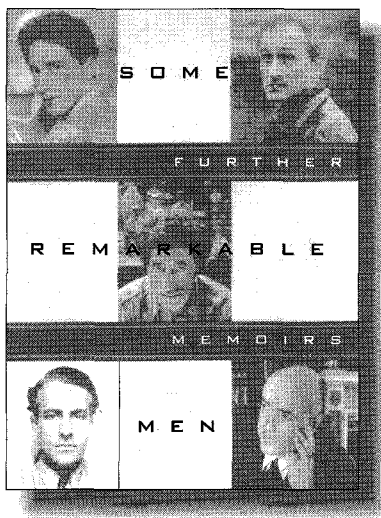


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DEPT. OF DISPUTATION

THE CRIMINALS OF TOMORROW

Are we wrong to feel optimistic about the crime rate? A Princeton professor thinks we are, and warns of a coming wave of juvenile "super-predators."

BY JAMES TRAUB

JOHN J. DI IULIO, JR., a thirty-eight-year-old professor at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, at Princeton, is an academic with a pamphleteer's rhetoric. He writes about criminal justice, and his work gives many of his peers fits. Most criminologists agree that the law-enforcement system discriminates against black men, that the prisons are full of low-level drug offenders who ought not to be there, and that we spend too much money on incarceration and not enough on treatment. Citing recent statistics, they claim that the crime rate has finally peaked;

the worst is behind us. DiIulio disagrees on every count: he believes that the system is not punitive *enough*; and he has been sounding alarms about the juvenile-crime rate, which has been rising rapidly over the past decade, and which he insists will continue to rise, even as the over-all crime rate has stabilized. DiIulio has a gift for the turn of phrase that quickly finds its way into politicians' speeches and sound bites, and he reports his findings not only in academic journals but in the *Reader's Digest* and on the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page. Simon & Schuster has just published "Body Count," a book DiIulio collaborated on with William Bennett, the bestselling author and former drug czar, and John P. Walters, an expert on drugs and crime. The book is full of anecdotes about remorseless killers, many of them still children. The authors quote one

prosecutor as saying, "It's 'Lord of the Flies' on a massive scale." "Body Count" also introduces the reading public to a term DiIulio has coined: "the super-predator."

DiIulio is provocative not only because of what he says but because of who he is. Besides being a tenured Ivy League professor, he is a Democrat who has sharply, and publicly, attacked the Contract with America and the new welfare law. He may be the only academic in the country who could say, as he did in a speech earlier this year, "It is no more true that most welfare recipients are lazy, undeserving people

than it is true that most prisoners are mere first-time nonviolent criminals." DiIulio, who grew up in a tough neighborhood in South Philadelphia, is adroit at using his working-class credentials to shield himself from the charge that he's simply indifferent to the fate of the young black offenders he would send off to prison. Jennifer Hochschild, a Princeton political scientist who is well to her colleague's left on most issues, says, "John feels very, very strongly that the real victims of black crime are people in the inner cities. The left doesn't want to take that fact seriously enough. It's a politically complicating fact—it's an emotionally complicating fact." Still, she says that DiIulio, with his confrontational style, "makes it about as difficult to agree with him as he can."

DiIulio's current obsession is juvenile crime—the "demographic crime bomb,"



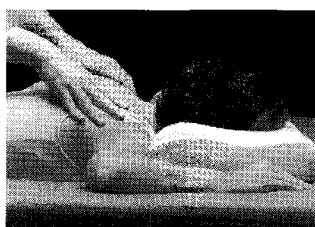
A Princeton colleague says that John DiIulio "loves playing the South Philadelphia thug made good."

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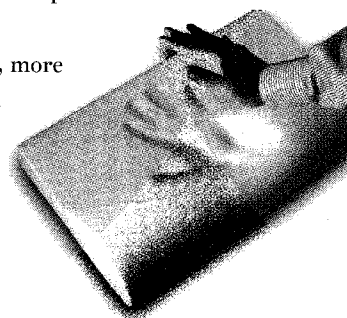
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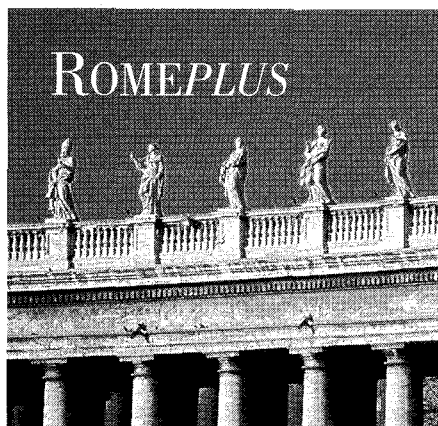
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as he describes it. His argument, which forms the core of "Body Count," runs as follows: First, although policing and correctional policies affect the crime rate, demographics matter even more. According to census reports, the number of juveniles in the population—and especially the number of minority juveniles—is now increasing faster than the general population. And while the percentage of chronic juvenile offenders has remained constant over time, the number and the violence of their crimes have increased dramatically. Thus, between 1985 and 1994, juvenile arrests for murder increased a hundred and fifty per cent, while arrests for aggravated assault and weapons charges doubled—this at a time when the adult-crime rate was levelling off. DiIulio concludes that in fifteen years there will be anywhere from a hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand juveniles in confinement on any given day, almost three times the current figure.

DiIulio's conclusions fly in the face of the recent good news about crime. The rate of violent crime among juveniles actually dropped last year for the first time since 1988, while the homicide rate for all offenders has fallen four years in a row. It has long been a truism among scholars that law enforcement has almost no effect on the crime rate. The recent sustained fall, however, has forced a rethinking, and one objection to DiIulio's analysis, offered by former New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton and others, is that he continues to underestimate the benefits of improved police work. And there may be other factors at work as well. "My sense is that some of the family pathologies are coming under control," Alfred Blumstein, a criminologist at Carnegie Mellon, says. He adds that, in any case, it's "better to focus on the pathologies than to say, Hey, boy, we better build some more prisons." DiIulio agrees that the long-term solution requires focussing on the pathologies but maintains that that alone won't solve the problem. He says, "I think it's almost laughable to take the position that because we've had our first decrease in the crime rate, happy days are here again, or this is all exaggerated, or this is some sort of right-wing plot. There are all sorts of indicators that suggest that we have a growing number of kids who are far more violent and far more prone to im-

pulsive violence." DiIulio cites, for example, the growth of gang violence in recent years. He and his co-authors write in "Body Count," "America is now home to thickening ranks of juvenile 'super-predators'—radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more pre-teenage boys, who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs, and create serious communal disorders. They do not fear the stigma of arrest, the pains of imprisonment, or the pangs of conscience."

There is something deeply disturbing about this kind of dehumanizing rhetoric. For all his talk about the importance of family, when DiIulio refers to a "new breed" of super-predators he is encouraging an implicit disavowal of kinship on the part of his reader. These kids are not like us; they are not even our kind—they are a different strain. "I dislike the term 'super-predators,'" Marvin Wolfgang, a criminologist at the University of Pennsylvania, says. "They may have committed some hard crimes, but that doesn't mean that they will be forever hardened criminals, or that they have a 'criminal mind.'" DiIulio believes that most juvenile offenders can be rehabilitated, but he does regard the most violent young people as intractable.

DiIulio's ability to get his ideas into the public arena—Bob Dole talked about "super-predators" in a radio address in July—obviously infuriates many academics who feel the public debate tipping away from them. In a piece in the *Los Angeles Times* this past summer, Franklin Zimring, a law professor at Berkeley, called DiIulio's juvenile-crime projection "phony," and accused him of fomenting a latter-day version of the Red scare. Zimring may be right about DiIulio's rhetoric, but he makes a mistake in attacking his statistics. He appears to have erroneously thought that DiIulio was predicting that two hundred and seventy thousand violent juveniles would be on the streets in 2010, whereas DiIulio wrote that they would be coming "in waves" over a ten- or fifteen-year period. DiIulio himself has admitted to carelessness in a few cases: he has written that fewer than half of all convicted violent felons are sentenced to prison, though in fact four-fifths wind up in some form of confinement. Nonetheless, the bulk of statistical evidence about trends in juvenile violence supports his views. Wolfgang cuttingly describes Di-

Iulio as a "textbook writer," because he relies on the research of others. But DiIulio often cites Wolfgang's own work to buttress his claim that violent juvenile crime is growing dramatically, and Wolfgang does not dispute DiIulio's interpretation.

DiIulio accuses his critics of "defining criminality down," a reference to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's oft-cited 1993 essay "Defining Deviancy Down." What DiIulio means is that conventional opinion has consistently sought to minimize the dreadfulness of violent crime so as not to distract attention from the social forces that turn young men into criminals in the first place. In this view, young black offenders are as much victims as they are predators. That is why it has been "liberal" to oppose stricter incarceration policies. DiIulio counters that, while the number of blacks in prison is indeed a terrible indictment of our society, it should not be construed as evidence that the criminal-justice system is racist, since blacks are imprisoned in direct proportion to their crime rate. The real victims of violent crime, DiIulio insists, are the law-abiding black men and women and children who are the principal targets of black crime. On this point, the tide may well be turning: Randall Kennedy, a highly respected black professor at Harvard Law School, has mounted much the same argument. And black views on crime are generally quite conservative. DiIulio cites a recent poll by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, in Washington, D.C., which found that seventy-three per cent of blacks favor "three strikes and you're out" sentencing laws.

DiIulio recognizes that the "super-predators" are natural products of what he calls a "criminogenic" environment; but he describes that environment in moral rather than in material terms. In this regard, he is very much a student of the conservative political scientist James Q. Wilson, who was his mentor at Harvard, where DiIulio received his Ph.D. In testimony before a Senate subcommittee on youth violence earlier this year, DiIulio defined "moral poverty" as "the poverty of being without loving, capable, responsible adults who teach you right from wrong. . . . In the extreme, it is the poverty of growing up surrounded by deviant, delinquent, and criminal adults in chaotic, dysfunctional, fatherless, Godless, and jobless settings where drug

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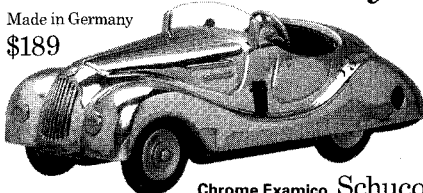
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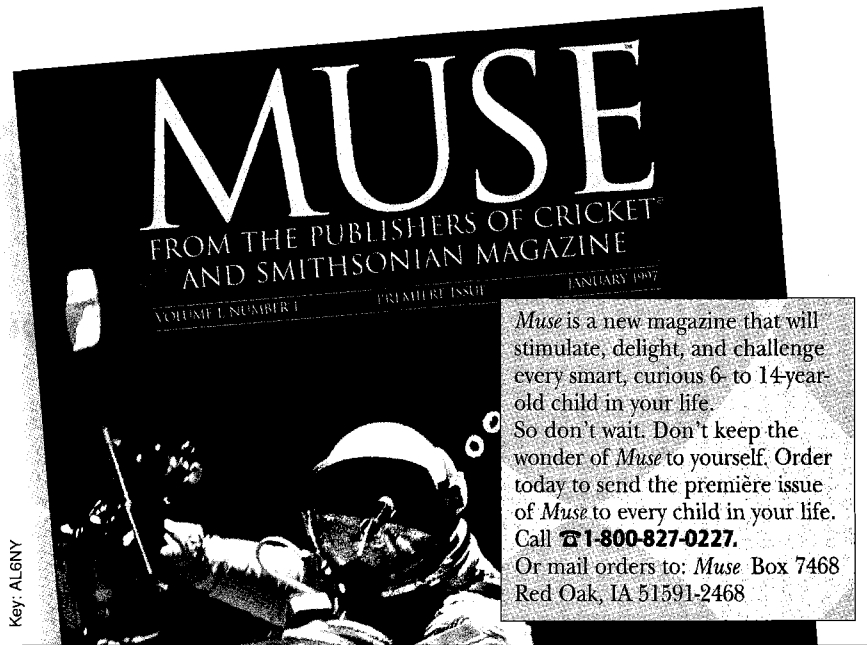
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abuse and child abuse are twins, and self-respecting young men literally aspire to get away with murder." As long as more young men, and especially young black men, keep being reared in an environment of failure and despair, he argues, juvenile violent crime will continue to increase. And he does not see many signs that the pathologies are coming under control. "No one relishes the thought of locking up more juveniles," he testified. "But it must be done."

DiIulio believes that punishment serves a moral as well as a practical end; he is openly contemptuous of such anti-incarceration groups as what he calls "the Sentencing Project and its turn-'em-loose comrades-in-arms." DiIulio is a serious student of prisons; even his harshest critics praise his 1987 book, "Governing Prisons," as a model of scholarly care. Perhaps his single greatest obsession has been to explode the widely held belief that the prisons are full of low-level offenders who should be in drug-treatment programs or in halfway houses or on probation. DiIulio says that only about ten per cent of inmates are minor drug offenders; he frequently cites a 1991 survey of state prisoners across the country which characterized sixty-two per cent of the inmates as violent offenders and another thirty-two per cent as repeat nonviolent offenders. In his own studies of the prison populations of individual states, he has found that the median number of crimes which inmates admitted to, excluding drug sales, was twelve. Criminologists respond that DiIulio shouldn't be lumping together violent and even repeat nonviolent offenders, and that a number of those twelve crimes are also nonviolent. These caveats sound suspiciously like defining criminality down.

DiIulio's ultimate point is that, even though the United States has an enormous prison population, it's not large compared with our staggering rate of violent crime. In 1992, he notes, there were ten million "violent crime victimizations," but only a hundred thousand people convicted of a violent crime were imprisoned. And, even after the passage of stricter sentencing laws in many states, the average violent offender serves only about half his sentence. DiIulio says, "If that's punitive, I'm punitive, most

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It could be said, even here, that what remains of the self
Unwinds into a vanishing light, and thins like dust, and heads
To a place where knowing and nothing pass into each other, and through;
That it moves, unwinding still, beyond the vault of brightness ended,
And continues to a place which may never be found, where the unsayable,
Finally, once more is uttered, but lightly, quickly, like random rain
That passes in sleep, that one imagines passes in sleep.
What remains of the self unwinds and unwinds, for none
Of the boundaries holds—neither the shapeless one between us
Nor the one that falls between your body and your voice. Joseph,
Dear Joseph, those sudden reminders of your having been—the places
And times whose greatest life was the one you gave them—now appear
Like ghosts in your wake. What remains of the self unwinds
Beyond us, for whom time is only a measure of meanwhile
And the future no more than et cetera, et cetera... but fast and forever.

—MARK STRAND

Americans are punitive. But I don't think we are. It's also considered bad form to remind people that we have two-thirds of the perpetrators on the street at any given time." This is another of DiIulio's favorite statistics, and what it means is that most violent felons in the correctional system are on probation or on parole, not in prison. DiIulio says that if he had his way he would remove from prison altogether the ten per cent or so of the population which he thinks consists of low-level drug offenders, and others, including the mentally ill, then return many of the parolees who should be serving longer sentences and the one out of every four probationers who is a repeat violent offender. DiIulio estimates that this would produce a prison population ten to fifteen per cent larger than it is now. DiIulio and others have strongly argued that incarceration cuts crime simply by taking criminals off the streets; it follows that prisons, expensive as they are, can cost less than crime itself.

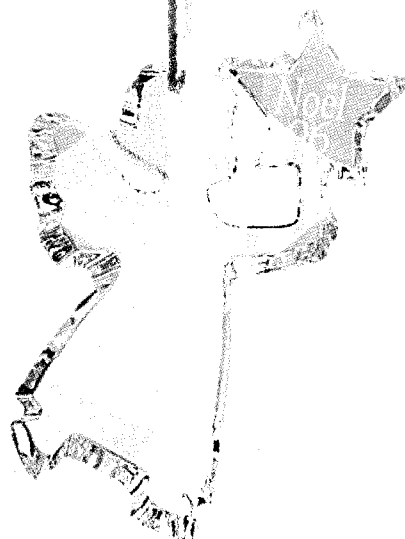
DI IULIO met me at the train station when I paid him a visit earlier this month in Philadelphia, where he keeps an office. (He lives in a nearby suburb with his wife, Rosalee, and their three children.) His assistant had told me to expect someone in a tie and a black jacket, but in fact the professor was wearing basketball sneakers, bluejeans, and a T-

shirt that hung about half a foot below the bottom of a baseball jacket. The T-shirt said, "There Used to Be a Ballpark Here"—a cri de cœur among old-time Philadelphians for the demolished Connie Mack Stadium. DiIulio did not look like a Princeton professor posing as a construction worker; he looked like a construction worker. He has the kind of torso where stomach and chest swell as one. But when he opens his mouth you don't think South Philly; you think Social Scientist. A colleague at Princeton says, "He loves playing the South Philadelphia thug made good."

DiIulio grew up along the collapsing urban frontier of the sixties and seventies, and he feels that he understands the anger not only of the white working class but also of the black poor and working class in a way that most of his ivory-tower colleagues cannot. I asked if he could drive me around his old neighborhood, and he happily complied. Leaving downtown Philadelphia behind, we drove over a flyway that bisects a vast Sunoco refinery, then through a bumpy patch of open land. "These are the junk yards where I grew up," DiIulio called out, as if he had been one of the Dead End Kids, though in fact his father had worked as a deputy sheriff and had once run for the citywide post of sheriff. As we drove past a little gas station, DiIulio said proudly, "One of my best buddies works there." We headed



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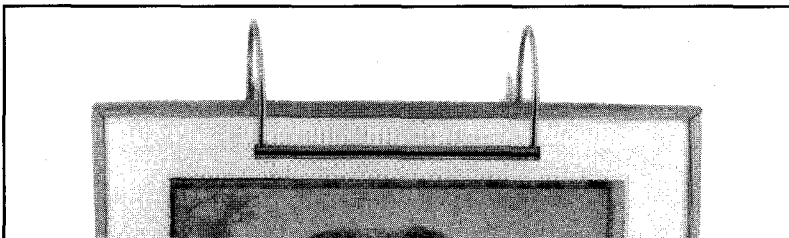
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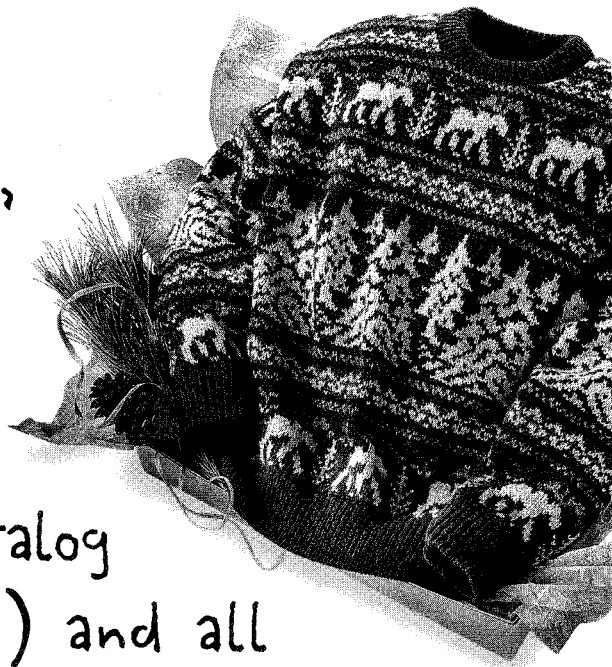
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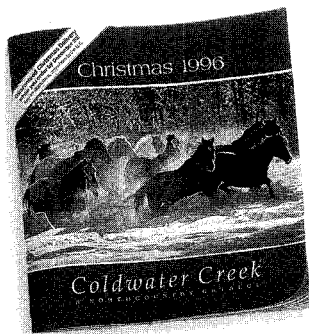
into Southwest, a neighborhood of trolley tracks and row houses and small stores—the stable world into which DiIulio was born. We went on into South Philly, where he had gone to elementary school; we stopped at his grandmother's house. The church had been here, the school here, the store there. Now it was all gone; South Philly was a ghetto. The occasional store made a tiny pool of light in the dusk; black men lingered idly on stoops. There had once been not only a ballpark but a life—the solid, working-class life that had been the foundation of the old industrial cities. DiIulio felt it all sliding downhill. His grandmother had been mugged repeatedly; an uncle had been stabbed to death by a paroled convict. Sitting in the car, in the gathering darkness, he said quietly, "This will be North Philadelphia in ten years; and Philadelphia will be Detroit in ten or twelve years."

DiIulio has followed a head-spinning trajectory to the top of the academic heap. The first person in his family even to attend college, he studied public policy at the University of Pennsylvania before going on to Harvard. He has been a wide-ranging and feverishly productive scholar from the outset of his career, and Princeton gave him tenure when he was only thirty. DiIulio still talks about how alien he found the politesse of academic life; and, rather than assimilate, he clung to his blunt South Philly style. A popular figure at Princeton, he is considered a dedicated teacher and a warm and ebullient colleague, but his bellicose style has also made him a target for harsh criticism. Earlier this year, a letter printed in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* called his work racist and accused him of pandering to the nation's worst instincts. And DiIulio, for all his bravado, is clearly pained by such charges. As we were sitting in his office, he suddenly said, "If you're coming from South Philly, and you're going to Penn and Harvard and Princeton, you're not supposed to be vehement. You're not supposed to be a raging bull. You're not supposed to get this far, or even be taken seriously at any level no matter what your work is, no matter how many awards you win, no matter how much early tenure you get, no matter what research you create—if you don't play by the rules of the normal polite discourse. To me, if the polite discourse is doing real harm, I

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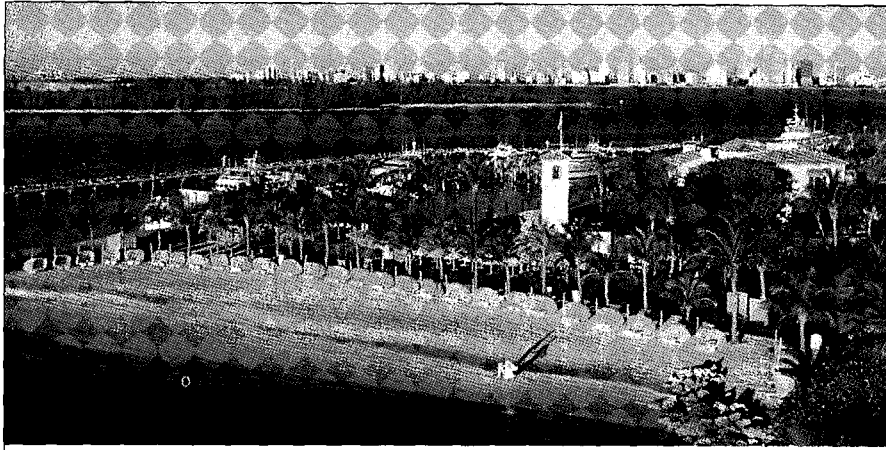


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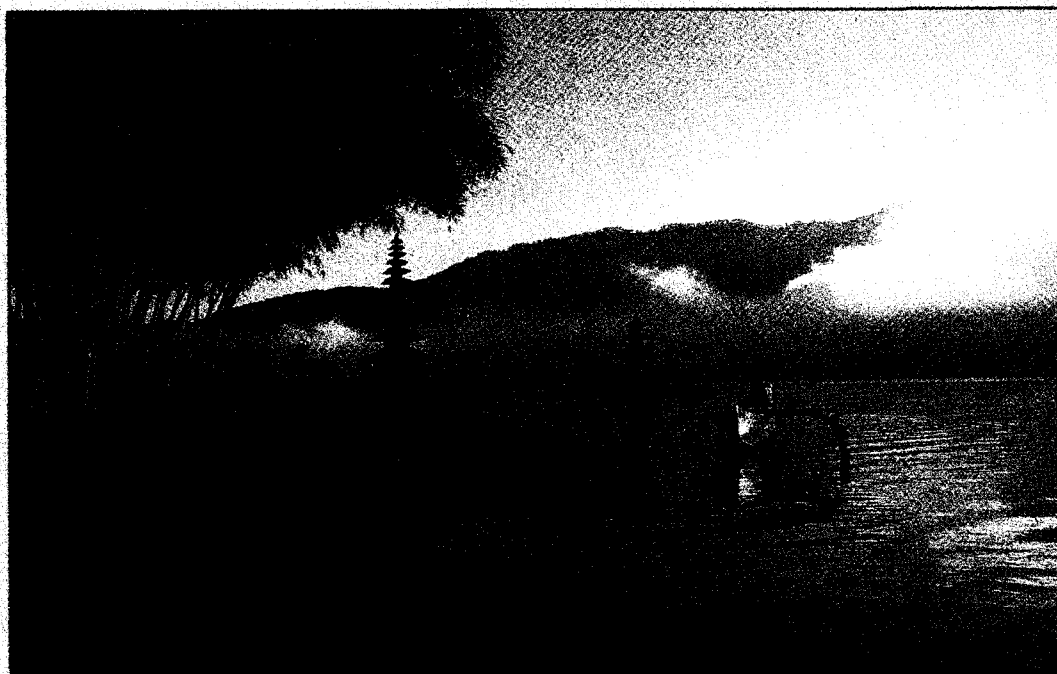
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don't care what the rules are." DiIulio glared through his heavy black-framed glasses.

Academically, DiIulio is more a synthesizer and a popularizer than an original thinker: he wants to bring ideas to the surface and use them to force change. DiIulio has testified before Congress on several pieces of legislation. His ideas helped mold the Democrats' 1994 crime bill, which, in a significant break from the past, provided hundreds of millions of dollars for new prison construction. Will Marshall, the head of the centrist Progressive Policy Institute, praises DiIulio for convincing "a lot of open-minded progressives and liberals" of the merits of incarceration. But DiIulio had serious problems with the legislation and, at a forum organized by the conservative activist William Kristol, criticized the bill for failing to address "revolving-door justice." The forum gave impetus to the Republican attack on the bill—an attack that featured mocking references to the "midnight basketball" programs it would have funded (programs DiIulio supports). Kristol says, "I think John was one of the main people who made the arguments that were then retailed on Rush Limbaugh and the *Journal* editorial page. He gave lots of congressmen confidence that it wasn't just their instincts, that there was a respectable Princeton professor who was willing to say it"—that the bill was soft on crime. DiIulio says that he was not engaging in partisan politics and doesn't tailor his conclusions for either party's purposes.

Marshall describes DiIulio as "a New Democrat." DiIulio wants to reinvent government rather than simply get rid of it; he has regularly criticized the Republican demonization of federal bureaucrats. And he feels that his work on criminal justice constitutes as much of a challenge to conservatives as it does to liberals. He favors gun-control laws and drug-treatment programs, though he also argues that liberals have exaggerated the benefits of both. "If you build all the jails in the world, you still have a primary- and secondary-prevention dilemma," DiIulio says—a need for alternatives to incarceration or release, such as "a meaningful, no-nonsense network of community-based residential facilities and programs." He adds, "The people on the right want to say, in effect, 'That's their problem. They should solve their own cultural

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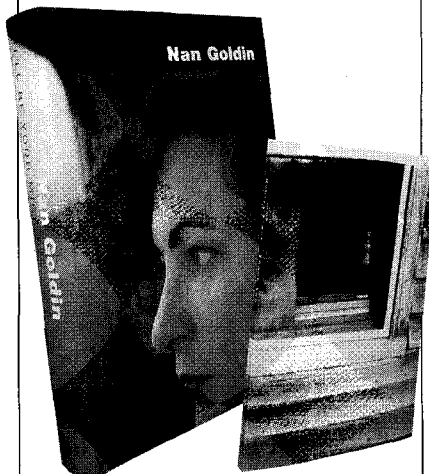
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problems: the orphans should build their own orphanages.' " Like Newt Gingrich, DiIulio thinks that children should be rescued from abusive households and placed in orphanages. But he would have the federal government help pay to do so. Voluntarism, he points out, is a wonderful principle, but philanthropy will never fill the hole left by the withdrawal of the state.

Nevertheless, DiIulio argues that, as crime is essentially a moral problem, the solution must be found in the moral realm. "Body Count" offers the kind of stern instructions on the need for "parental and moral guidance" for which William Bennett is famous. In a recent article in the conservative *Weekly Standard*, where DiIulio is a regular contributor, he suggested that we "bring back the shotgun marriage" by subjecting absconding fathers to public opprobrium. He wants to "re-moralize" the culture generally and inner-city culture specifically. DiIulio doesn't pay much attention to institutional solutions; but there is one urban institution that he truly cares about reviving, and that is the black church. "If we are to have a prayer of stopping any significant fraction of the super-predators short of the prison gates," he has written, "then we had better say 'Amen,' and fast." DiIulio believes that the moral authority of the church is the only way to counter the ruinous influences of inner-city life. He also points out that

churches are virtually the only institution left standing in many ghettos; it makes sense to channel the kind of social services that inner-city kids and their families desperately need through the existing network of churches. His heroes are the black ministers who have dedicated themselves to turning troubled kids around.

DiIulio berates conservatives for giving lip service, rather than active support, to these kinds of effort; he would like to see public funds used to support church-based social services. It is a practicable, and even an activist, solution to the problems of the inner city, but it's also a strikingly modest one for a person who claims to believe in the state. "Body Count" has virtually nothing to say about jobs, housing, or health care. Jerome Skolnick, an adjunct professor at New York University's School of Law, says of DiIulio, "He's pushing the politics of virtue—there's no controversy there. The question is, What are the conditions under which people are inclined to be virtuous? You have to look beyond these platitudes."

When I pressed DiIulio on this subject, he responded that "Body Count" was not "broadly conceived." He said he had spoken just the day before to William Julius Wilson, the Harvard scholar who lays the blame for ghetto pathologies on the disappearance of jobs. DiIulio says that he agrees with Wilson's analysis,



"I know you're a working dog, Angus. I just don't have anything for you right now."

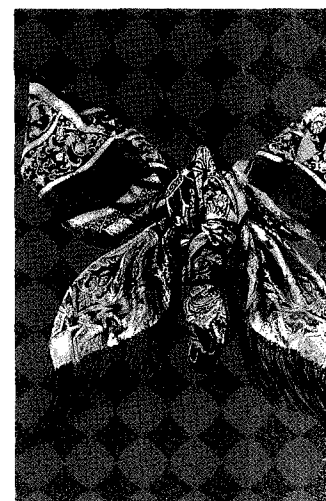
Your exterior
both hides and
hints at the
complexities
within. Your
handbag should
be no different.
It should have
personality.
In a nutshell—
presence.

THE EVOLUTION OF STYLE

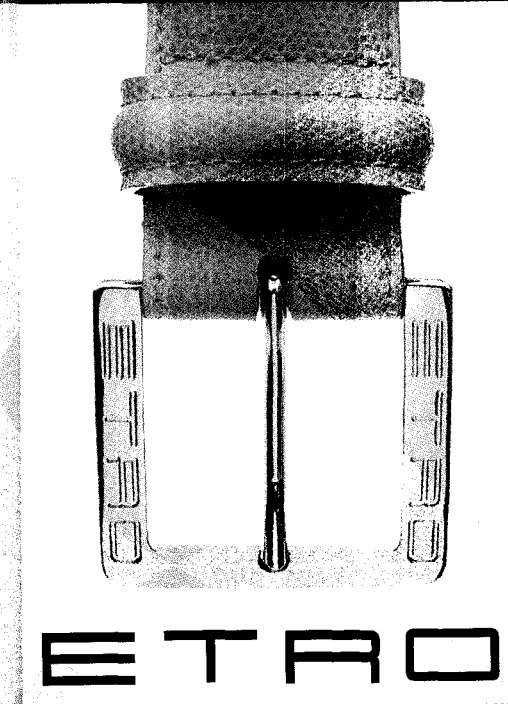
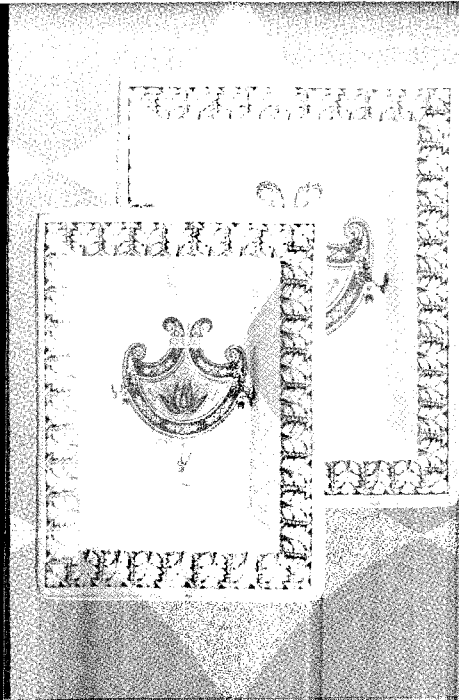
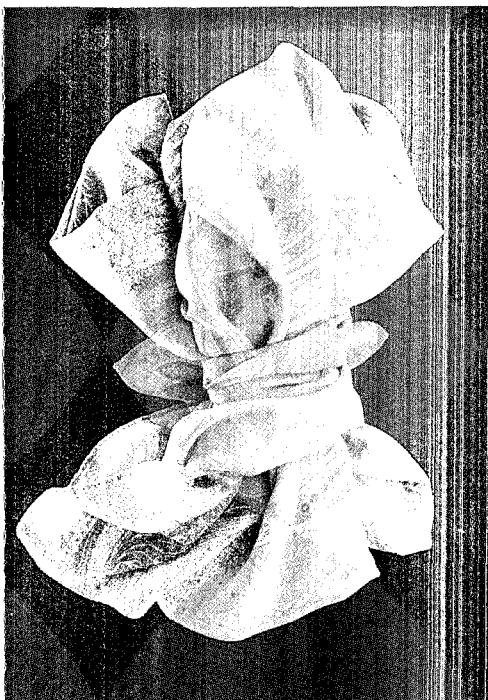
There is a place where classic
collides with contemporary,
where tradition fuses with
innovation. In such a charged
environment, electricity lingers,
and style—style takes on
a life of its own.

hades of fall
rendered in
rich, crisp silk.
Layered, like
memories,
comforting
cocoon of
seasonal foliage.
Watch as the
world nods
approvingly
to nature's
handiwork.

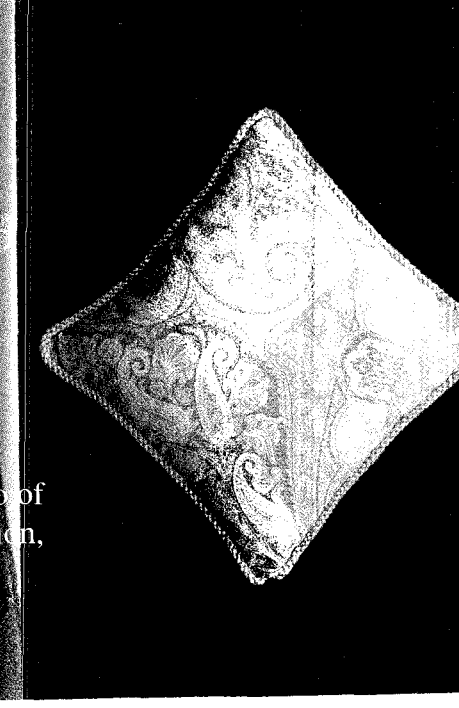
Be bold.
Be daring.
Be comfortable.
Be. And set the
room buzzing
with tales of
audacious
exploits. Your
suit alone
confirms that
every word
you say is true.



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chameleon
is timid,
preferring
to blend.
Show your
confidence.
Show your
true colors.



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CONVERSATION WITH A SEAGULL

IN MEMORIAM JOSEPH BRODSKY

Poem-maker, your guild disbanded, not one
 Man left at his station:
 Love-adept, at last unbefriended, no win,
 Your situation,
 So what if some cloud from your most Aquarian mood,
 Or a snowflake of brain,
 Drifts above Shandon, prospecting for Leningrad
 Through thickening rain,
 Puzzling in vain for the wobbly Venetian "O"s
 Of arch-backed embraces,
 The aristocratic self-disregard of palazzos?
 Such weathers aren't voices.
 Say the feathery soul of your river-love just gave a cry
 As it dived from the railing—
 A gull is a Soviet type, mass-produced, sly.
 Your wings would be flailing.
 Whether nature plays God is still what I want to know.
 Can selves be reformed
 Like the river from rain? And now I can hear it abseiling
 In spirals down from your vast oratorical
 Rucksack—the question. *The question, Karol, you're saying,*
Is surely rhetorical?
The self is—well—imaginary, and it will go
Nowhere—or wherever imaginings go.

—CAROL RUMENS

but also believes that it's unrealistic to expect ambitious jobs programs in the current political climate. (Large-scale schemes of reform seem to raise his hackles.)

DiIulio is too passionately engaged with his subject to be satisfied with merely writing about it. He is now on leave from Princeton to work with a research group called Public/Private Ventures, evaluating church-based social programs. He is also building a network to coordinate the efforts of inner-city black ministers. He says that he is thinking seriously about leaving academic life in order to work full time with black churches and to study their effectiveness; he has, he says, broached the idea to his family. "My biggest contribution to date," DiIulio says, "has been to make it impossible for people who a decade ago were saying things like 'Incarceration does not cut crime'—you can't do that anymore. I had a good deal to do with that." And now that he had reframed the problem, he said, he was hoping to reframe the solution—"the notion of children in need of adults."

Will DiIulio be able to extricate himself from the consequences of his own rhetoric? He has had his greatest successes when he harnessed public disgust and impatience, and has been far more effective in changing the ground of debate on incarceration than on orphanages, or on rehabilitation, or on community-based facilities. Until now, DiIulio has pressed the attack on the "turn 'em loose" crowd with a great deal more fervor than he has the attack on conservative passivity. The result is that he has strengthened the position of people whose views are far less nuanced than his own. Lately, DiIulio seems to have been looking in the mirror and wondering if he has turned into something he never intended. "I probably am guilty of being more self-righteous than I should be," he confessed to me. He had shown, he thought, too little concern for "fraternal correction" when pointing out errors on the part of his colleagues. DiIulio is now hoping to preach to public compassion rather than to public fear. In this regard, at least, "Body Count" is probably not a step in the right direction. ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE SCIENCE OF SHOPPING

The American shopper has never been so fickle. What are stores, including the new flagship designer boutiques, doing about it? Applying science.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

HUMAN beings walk the way they drive, which is to say that Americans tend to keep to the right when they stroll down shopping-mall concourses or city sidewalks. This is why in a well-designed airport travellers drifting toward their gate will always find the fast-food restaurants on their left and the gift shops on their right: people will readily cross a lane of pedestrian traffic to satisfy their hunger but rarely to make an impulse buy of a T-shirt or a magazine. This is also why Paco Underhill tells his retail clients to make sure that their window displays are canted, preferably to both sides but especially to the left, so that a potential shopper approaching the store on the inside of the sidewalk—the shopper, that is, with the least impeded view of the store window—can see the display from at least twenty-five feet away.

Of course, a lot depends on how fast the potential shopper is walking. Paco, in his previous life, as an urban geographer in Manhattan, spent a great deal of time thinking about walking speeds as he listened in on the great debates of the nineteen-seventies over whether the traffic lights in midtown should be timed to facilitate the movement of cars or to facilitate the movement of pedestrians and so break up the big platoons that move down Manhattan sidewalks. He knows that the faster you walk the more your peripheral vision narrows, so you become unable to pick up visual cues as quickly as someone who is just ambling along. He knows, too, that people who walk fast take a surprising amount of time to slow down—just as it takes a good stretch of road to change gears with a stick-shift automobile. On the basis of his research, Paco estimates the human downshift period to be anywhere from twelve to twenty-five feet, so if you own a store, he

says, you never want to be next door to a bank: potential shoppers speed up when they walk past a bank (since there's nothing to look at), and by the time they slow down they've walked right past your business. The downshift factor also means that when potential shoppers enter a store it's going to take them from five to fifteen paces to adjust to the light and refocus and gear down from walking speed to shopping speed—particularly if they've just had to navigate a treacherous parking lot or hurry to make the light at Fifty-seventh and Fifth.

Paco calls that area inside the door the Decompression Zone, and something he tells clients over and over again is never, *ever* put anything of value in that zone—not shopping baskets or tie racks or big promotional displays—because no one is going to see it. Paco believes that, as a rule of thumb, customer interaction with any product or promotional display in the Decompression Zone will increase at least thirty per cent once it's moved to the back edge of the zone, and even more if it's placed to the right, because another of the fundamental rules of how human beings shop is that upon entering a store—whether it's Nordstrom or K mart, Tiffany or the Gap—the shopper invariably and reflexively turns to the right. Paco believes in the existence of the Invariant Right because he has actually verified it. He has put cameras in stores trained directly on the doorway, and if you go to his office, just above Union Square, where videocassettes and boxes of Super-eight film from all his work over the years are stacked in plastic Tupperware containers practically up to the ceiling, he can show you reel upon reel of grainy entryway video—customers striding in the door, downshifting, refocussing, and then, again and again, making that little half turn.

Paco Underhill is a tall man in his mid-forties, partly bald, with a neatly trimmed beard and an engaging, almost goofy manner. He wears baggy khakis and shirts open at the collar, and generally looks like the academic he might have been if he hadn't been captivated, twenty years ago, by the ideas of the urban anthropologist William Whyte. It was Whyte who pioneered the use of time-lapse photography as a tool of urban planning, putting cameras in parks and the plazas in front of office buildings in midtown Manhattan, in order to determine what distinguished a public space that worked from one that didn't. As a Columbia undergraduate, in 1974, Paco heard a lecture on Whyte's work and, he recalls, left the room "walking on air." He immediately read everything Whyte had written. He emptied his bank account to buy cameras and film and make his own home movie, about a pedestrian mall in Poughkeepsie. He took his "little exercise" to Whyte's advocacy group, the Project for Public Spaces, and was offered a job. Soon, however, it dawned on Paco that Whyte's ideas could be taken a step further—that the same techniques he used to establish why a plaza worked or didn't work could also be used to determine why a store worked or didn't work. Thus was born the field of retail anthropology, and, not long afterward, Paco founded EnviroSell, which in just over fifteen years has counselled some of the most familiar names in American retailing, from Levi Strauss to Kinney, Starbucks, McDonald's, Blockbuster, Apple Computer, A.T. & T., and a number of upscale retailers that Paco would rather not name.

When Paco gets an assignment, he and his staff set up a series of videocameras throughout the test store and then back the cameras up with EnviroSell staf-

fers—trackers, as they're known—armed with clipboards. Where the cameras go and how many trackers Paco deploys depends on exactly what the store wants to know about its shoppers. Typically, though, he might use six cameras and two or three trackers, and let the study run for two or three days, so that at the end he would have pages and pages of carefully annotated tracking sheets and anywhere from a hundred to five hundred hours of film. These days, given the expansion of his business, he might tape fifteen thousand hours in a year, and, given that he has been in operation since the late seventies, he now has well over a hundred thousand hours of tape in his library.

Even in the best of times, this would be a valuable archive. But today, with the retail business in crisis, it is a gold mine. The time per visit that the average American spends in a shopping mall was sixty-six minutes last year—down from seventy-two minutes in 1992—and is the lowest number ever recorded. The amount of selling space per American shopper is now more than double what it was in the mid-seventies, meaning that profit margins have never been narrower, and the costs of starting a retail business—and of failing—have never been

higher. In the past few years, countless dazzling new retailing temples have been built along Fifth and Madison Avenues—Barneys, Calvin Klein, Armani, Valentino, Banana Republic, Prada, Chanel, Nike Town, and on and on—but it is an explosion of growth based on no more than a hunch, a hopeful multimillion-dollar gamble that the way to break through is to provide the shopper with spectacle and more spectacle. "The arrogance is gone," Millard Drexler, the president and C.E.O. of the Gap, told me. "Arrogance makes failure. Once

you think you know the answer, it's almost always over." In such a competitive environment, retailers don't just want to know how shoppers behave in their stores. They *have* to know. And who better to ask than Paco Underhill, who in the past decade and a half has analyzed

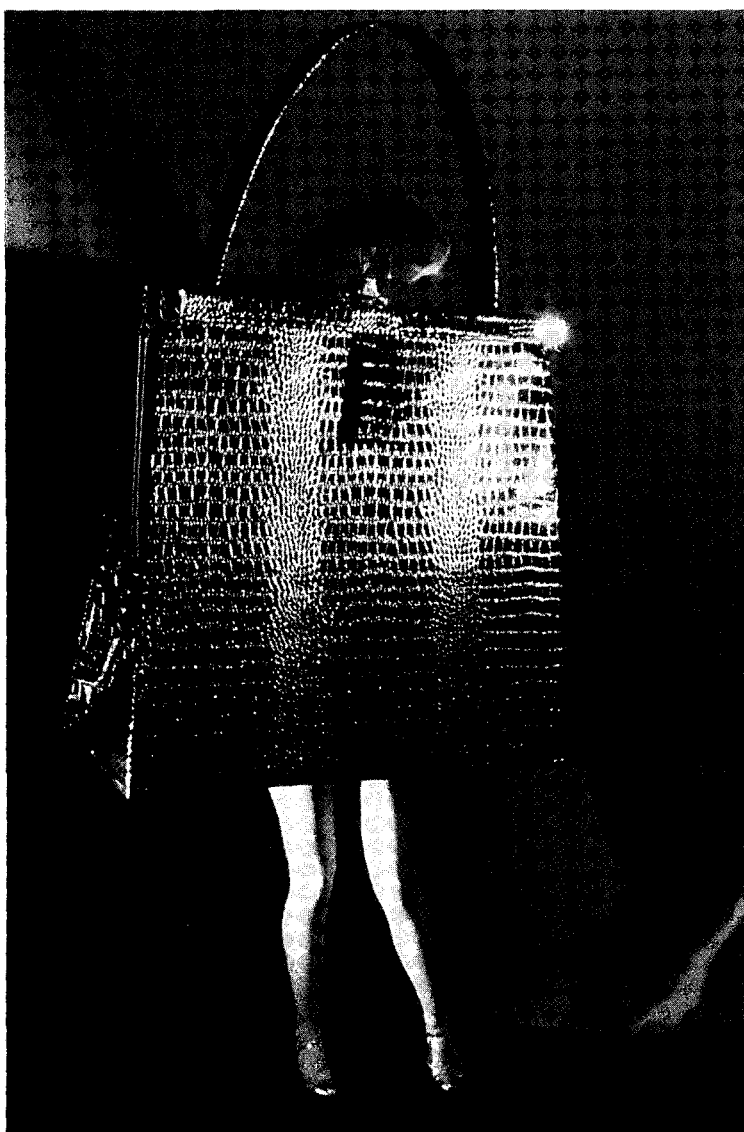
brushed on her behind while she's examining merchandise. Touch—or brush or bump or jostle—a woman on the behind when she has stopped to look at an item, and she will bolt. Actually, calling this a theory is something of a misnomer, because Paco doesn't offer any explanation

for why women react that way, aside from venturing that they are "more sensitive back there." It's really an observation, based on repeated and close analysis of his videotape library, that Paco has transformed into a retailing commandment: a women's product that requires extensive examination should never be placed in a narrow aisle.

Paco approaches the problem of the Invariant Right the same way. Some retail thinkers see this as a subject crying out for interpretation and speculation. The design guru Joseph Weishar, for example, argues, in his magisterial "Design for Effective Selling Space," that the Invariant Right is a function of the fact that we "absorb and digest information in the left part of the brain" and "assimilate and logically use this information in the right half," the result being that we scan the store from left to right and then fix on an object to the right "essentially at a 45 degree angle from the point that we enter."

When I asked Paco about this interpretation, he shrugged, and said he thought the reason was simply that most people are right-handed. Uncovering the fundamentals of "why" is clearly not a pursuit that engages him much. He is not a theoretician but an empiricist, and for him the important thing is that in amassing his huge library of in-store time-lapse photography he has gained enough hard evidence to know how often and under what circumstances the Invariant Right is expressed and how to take advantage of it.

What Paco likes are facts. They come



One market-research firm has divided the entire country into sixty-two different retail categories: Shotguns & Pickups, Bohemia Mix, and so on.

tens of thousands of hours of shopping videotape and, as a result, probably knows more about the strange habits and quirks of the species *Emptor americanus* than anyone else alive?

PACO is considered the originator, for example, of what is known in the trade as the butt-brush theory—or, as Paco calls it, more delicately, *le facteur bousculade*—which holds that the likelihood of a woman's being converted from a browser to a buyer is inversely proportional to the likelihood of her being

tumbling out when he talks, and, because he speaks with a slight hesitation—lingering over the first syllable in, for example, “re-tail” or “de-sign”—he draws you in, and you find yourself truly hanging on his words. “We have reached a historic point in American history,” he told me in our very first conversation. “Men, for the first time, have begun to buy their own underwear.” He then paused to let the comment sink in, so that I could absorb its implications, before he elaborated: “Which means that we have to *totally* rethink the way we sell that product.” In the parlance of Hollywood scriptwriters, the best endings must be surprising and yet inevitable; and the best of Paco’s pronouncements take the same shape. It would never have occurred to me to wonder about the increasingly critical role played by touching—or, as Paco calls it, petting—clothes in the course of making the decision to buy them. But then I went to the Gap and to Banana Republic and saw people touching and fondling and, one after another, buying shirts and sweaters laid out on big wooden tables, and what Paco told me—which was no doubt based on what he had seen on his videotapes—made perfect sense: that the reason the Gap and Banana Republic have tables is not merely that sweaters and shirts look better there, or that tables fit into the warm and relaxing residential feeling that the Gap and Banana Republic are trying to create in their stores, but that tables invite—indeed, symbolize—touching. “Where do we eat?” Paco asks. “We eat, we pick up food, on tables.”

Paco produces for his clients a series of carefully detailed studies, totalling forty to a hundred and fifty pages, filled with product-by-product breakdowns and bright-colored charts and graphs. In one recent case, he was asked by a major clothing retailer to analyze the first of a new chain of stores that the firm planned to open. One of the things the client wanted to know was how successful the store was in drawing people into its depths, since the chances that shoppers will buy something are directly related to how long they spend shopping, and how long they spend shopping is directly related to how deep they get pulled into the store. For this reason, a supermarket will often put dairy products on one side, meat at the back, and fresh produce on the other side, so that the typical shop-

per can’t just do a drive-by but has to make an entire circuit of the store, and be tempted by everything the supermarket has to offer. In the case of the new clothing store, Paco found that ninety-one per cent of all shoppers penetrated as deep as what he called Zone 4, meaning more than three-quarters of the way in, well past the accessories and shirt racks and belts in the front, and little short of the far wall, with the changing rooms and the pants stacked on shelves. Paco regarded this as an extraordinary figure, particularly for a long, narrow store like this one, where it is not unusual for the rate of penetration past, say, Zone 3 to be under fifty per cent. But that didn’t mean the store was perfect—far from it. For Paco, all kinds of questions remained.

Purchasers, for example, spent an average of eleven minutes and twenty-seven seconds in the store, nonpurchasers two minutes and thirty-six seconds. It wasn’t that the nonpurchasers just cruised in and out: in those two minutes and thirty-six seconds, they went deep into the store and examined an average of 3.42 items. So why didn’t they buy? What, exactly, happened to cause some browsers to buy and other browsers to walk out the door?

Then, there was the issue of the number of products examined. The purchasers were looking at an average of 4.81 items but buying only 1.33 items. Paco found this statistic deeply disturbing. As the retail market grows more cutthroat, store owners have come to realize that it’s all but impossible to increase the number of customers coming in, and have concentrated instead on getting the customers they do have to buy more. Paco thinks that if you can sell someone a pair of pants you must also be able to sell that person a belt, or a pair of socks, or a pair of underpants, or even do what the Gap does so well: sell a person a complete outfit. To Paco, the figure 1.33 suggested that the store was doing something very wrong, and one day when I visited him in his office he sat me down in front of one of his many VCRs to see how he looked for the 1.33 culprit.



It should be said that sitting next to Paco is a rather strange experience. “My mother says that I’m the best-paid spy in America,” he told me. He laughed, but he wasn’t entirely joking. As a child, Paco had a nearly debilitating stammer, and, he says, “since I was never that comfortable talking I always relied on my eyes to understand things.” That much is obvious from the first moment you meet him: Paco is one of those people who look right at you, soaking up every nuance and detail. It isn’t a hostile gaze, because Paco isn’t hostile at all. He has a big smile, and he’ll call you “chief” and use your first name a lot and generally act as if he knew you well. But that’s the awkward thing: he has looked at you so closely that you’re sure he does know you well, and you, meanwhile, hardly know him at all.

This kind of asymmetry is even more pronounced when you watch his shopping videos with him, because every movement or gesture means something to Paco—he has spent his adult life deconstructing the shopping experience—but nothing to the outsider, or, at least, not at first. Paco had to keep stopping the video to get me to see things through his eyes before I began to understand. In one sequence, for example, a camera mounted high on the wall outside the changing rooms documented a man and a woman shopping for a pair of pants for what appeared to be their daughter, a girl in her mid-teens. The tapes are soundless, but the basic steps of the shopping dance are so familiar to Paco that, once I’d grasped the general idea, he was able to provide a running commentary on what was being said and thought. There is the girl emerging from the changing room wearing her first pair. There she is glancing at her reflection in the mirror, then turning to see herself from the back. There is the mother looking on. There is the father—or, as fathers are known in the trade, the “wallet carrier”—stepping forward and pulling up the jeans. There’s the girl trying on another pair. There’s the primp again. The twirl. The mother. The wallet carrier. And then again, with another pair. The full sequence lasted twenty minutes, and at the end came the take-home lesson, for which Paco called in one of his colleagues, Tom Moseman, who had supervised the project.

“This is a very critical moment,”

Tom, a young, intense man wearing little round glasses, said, and he pulled up a chair next to mine. "She's saying, 'I don't know whether I should wear a belt.' Now here's the salesclerk. The girl says to him, 'I need a belt,' and he says, 'Take mine.' Now there he is taking her back to the full-length mirror."

A moment later, the girl returns, clearly happy with the purchase. She wants the jeans. The wallet carrier turns to her, and then gestures to the salesclerk. The wallet carrier is telling his daughter to give back the belt. The girl gives back the belt. Tom stops the tape. He's leaning forward now, a finger jabbing at the screen. Beside me, Paco is shaking his head. I don't get it—at least, not at first—and so Tom replays that last segment. The wallet carrier tells the girl to give back the belt. She gives back the belt. And then, finally, it dawns on me why this store has an average purchase number of only 1.33. "Don't you see?" Tom said. *"She wanted the belt. A great opportunity to make an add-on sale . . . lost!"*

SHOULD we be afraid of Paco Underhill? One of the fundamental anxieties of the American consumer, after all, has always been that beneath the pleasure and the frivolity of the shopping experience runs an undercurrent of manipulation, and that anxiety has rarely seemed more justified than today. The practice of prying into the minds and habits of American consumers is now a multibillion-dollar business. Every time a product is pulled across a supermarket checkout scanner, information is recorded, assembled, and sold to a market-research firm for analysis. There are companies that put tiny cameras inside frozen-food cases in supermarket aisles; market-research firms that feed census data and behavioral statistics into algorithms and come out with complicated maps of the American consumer; anthropologists who sift through the garbage of carefully targeted households to analyze their true consumption patterns; and endless rounds of highly organized focus groups and ques-



"Can't you tell? I'm a depressed and angry white working-class male."

tionnaire takers and phone surveyors. That some people are now tracking our every shopping move with video cameras seems in many respects the last straw: Paco's movies are, after all, creepy. They look like the surveillance videos taken during convenience-store holdups—hazy and soundless and slightly warped by the angle of the lens. When you watch them, you find yourself waiting for something bad to happen, for someone to shoplift or pull a gun on a cashier.

The more time you spend with Paco's videos, though, the less scary they seem. After an hour or so, it's no longer clear whether simply by watching people shop—and analyzing their every move—you can learn how to control them. The shopper that emerges from the videos is not pliable or manipulable. The screen shows people filtering in and out of stores, petting and moving on, abandoning their merchandise because checkout lines are too long, or leaving a store empty-handed because they couldn't fit their stroller into the aisle between two shirt racks. Paco's shoppers are fickle and headstrong, and are quite unwilling to

buy anything unless conditions are perfect—unless the belt is presented at *exactly* the right moment. His theories of the butt-brush and petting and the Decompression Zone and the Invariant Right seek not to make shoppers conform to the desires of sellers but to make sellers conform to the desires of shoppers. What Paco is teaching his clients is a kind of slavish devotion to the shopper's every whim. He is teaching them humility.

Paco has worked with supermarket chains, and when you first see one of his videos of grocery aisles it looks as if he really had—at least in this instance—got one up on the shopper. The clip he showed me was of a father shopping with a small child, and it was an example of what is known in the trade as "advocacy," which basically means what happens when your four-year-old goes over and grabs a bag of cookies that the store has conveniently put on the bottom shelf, and demands that it be purchased. In the clip, the father takes what the child offers him. "Generally, dads are not as good as moms at saying no," Paco said as we watched the little boy approach his dad.

"Men tend to be more impulse-driven than women in grocery stores. We know that they tend to shop less often with a list. We know that they tend to shop much less frequently with coupons, and we know, simply by watching them shop, that they can be marching down the aisle and something will catch their eye and they will stop and buy." This kind of weakness on the part of fathers might seem to give the supermarket an advantage in the cookie-selling wars, particularly since more and more men go grocery shopping with their children. But then Paco let drop a hint about a study he'd just done in which he discovered, to his and everyone else's amazement, that shoppers had already figured this out, that they were already one step ahead—that *families were avoiding the cookie aisle*.

This may seem like a small point. But it begins to explain why, even though retailers seem to know more than ever about how shoppers behave, even though their efforts at intelligence-gathering have rarely seemed more intrusive and more formidable, the retail business remains in crisis. The reason is that shoppers are a moving target. They are becoming more and more complicated, and retailers need to know more and more about them simply to keep pace.

This fall, for example, Estée Lauder is testing in a Toronto shopping mall a new concept in cosmetics retailing. Gone is the enclosed rectangular counter, with the sales staff on one side, customers on the other, and the product under glass in the middle. In its place the company has provided an assortment of product-display, consultation, and testing kiosks arranged in a broken circle, with a service desk and a cashier in the middle. One of the kiosks is a "makeup play area," which allows customers to experiment on their own with a hundred and thirty different shades of lipstick. There are four self-service displays—for perfumes, skin-care products, and makeup—which are easily accessible to customers who have already made up their minds. And, for those who haven't, there is a semiprivate booth for personal consultations with beauty advisers and makeup artists. The redesign was prompted by the realization that the modern working woman no longer had the time or the inclination to ask a salesclerk to assist her in every purchase, that choosing among shades of lipstick did not require the same level of

service as, say, getting up to speed on new developments in skin care, that a shopper's needs were now too diverse to be adequately served by just one kind of counter.

"I was going from store to store, and the traffic just wasn't there," Robin Burns, the president and C.E.O. of Estée Lauder U.S.A. and Canada, told me. "We had to get rid of the glass barricade." The most interesting thing about the new venture, though, is what it says about the shifting balance of power between buyer and seller. Around the old rectangular counter, the relationship of clerk to customer was formal and subtly paternalistic. If you wanted to look at a lipstick, you had to ask for it. "Twenty years ago, the sales staff would consult with you and *tell* you what you needed, as opposed to asking and recommending," Burns said. "And in those days people believed what the salesperson told them." Today, the old hierarchy has been inverted. "Women want to draw their own conclusions," Burns said. Even the architecture of the consultation kiosk speaks to the transformation: the beauty adviser now sits beside the customer, not across from her.

THIS doesn't mean that marketers and retailers have stopped trying to figure out what goes on in the minds of shoppers. One of the hottest areas in market research, for example, is something called typing, which is a sophisticated attempt to predict the kinds of products that people will buy or the kind of promotional pitch they will be susceptible to on the basis of where they live or how they score on short standardized questionnaires. One market-research firm in Virginia, Claritas, has divided the entire country, neighborhood by neighborhood, into sixty-two different categories—Pools & Patios, Shotguns & Pickups, Bohemia Mix, and so on—using census data and results from behavioral surveys. On the basis of my address in Greenwich Village, Claritas classifies me as Urban Gold Coast, which means that I like Kellogg's Special K, spend more than two hundred and fifty dollars on sports coats, watch "Seinfeld," and buy metal polish. Such typing systems—and there are a number of them—can be scarily accurate. I actually do buy Kellogg's Special K, have spent more than two hundred and fifty dollars on a sports coat, and watch "Seinfeld." (I don't buy metal polish.) In fact, when I was typed by a

company called Total Research, in Princeton, the results were so dead-on that I got the same kind of creepy feeling that I got when I first watched Paco's videos. On the basis of a seemingly innocuous multiple-choice test, I was scored as an eighty-nine-per-cent Intellect and a seven-per-cent Relief Seeker (which I thought was impressive until John Morton, who developed the system, told me that virtually everyone who reads *The New Yorker* is an Intellect). When I asked Morton to guess, on the basis of my score, what kind of razor I used, he riffed, brilliantly, and without a moment's hesitation. "If you used an electric razor, it would be a Braun," he began. "But, if not, you're probably shaving with Gillette, if only because there really isn't an Intellect safety-razor positioning out there. Schick and Bic are simply not logical choices for you, although I'm thinking, You're fairly young, and you've got that Relief Seeker side. It's possible you would use Bic because you don't like that all-American, overly confident masculine statement of Gillette. It's a very, very conventional positioning that Gillette uses. But then they've got the technological angle with the Gillette Sensor. . . . I'm thinking Gillette. It's Gillette."

He was right. I shave with Gillette—though I didn't even know that I do. I had to go home and check. But information about my own predilections may be of limited usefulness in predicting how I shop. In the past few years, market researchers have paid growing attention to the role in the shopping experience of a type of consumer known as a Market Maven. "This is a person you would go to for advice on a car or a new fashion," said Linda Price, a marketing professor at the University of South Florida, who first came up with the Market Maven concept, in the late eighties. "This is a person who has information on a lot of different products or prices or places to shop. This is a person who likes to initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests. Market Mavens like to be helpers in the marketplace. They take you shopping. They go shopping for you, and it turns out they are a lot more prevalent than you would expect." Mavens watch more television than almost anyone else does, and they read more magazines and open their junk mail and look closely at advertisements and have an awful lot of influence on everyone

BY GEORGE, SHE'S GOT IT!

*Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy's
Autumn Wardrobe*

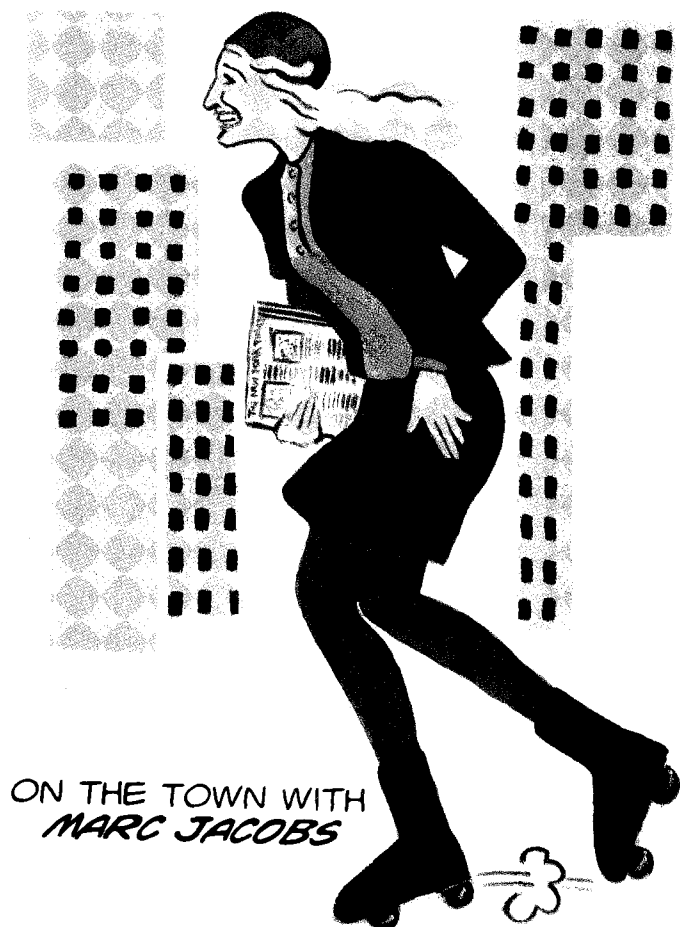
SUGGESTED BY MICHAEL ROBERTS



LUNCH WITH *BILL BLASS*



IN THE COUNTRY WITH
ANNA SUI



ON THE TOWN WITH
MARC JACOBS



AN EVENING WITH *DONNA KARAN*

else. According to Price, sixty per cent of Americans claim to know a Maven.

The key question, then, is not what I think but what my Mavens think. The challenge for retailers and marketers, in turn, is not so much to figure out and influence my preferences as to figure out and influence the preferences of my Mavens, and that is a much harder task. "What's really interesting is that the distribution of Mavens doesn't vary by ethnic category, by income, or by professional status," Price said. "A working woman is just as likely to be a Market Maven as a nonworking woman. You might say that Mavens are likely to be older, unemployed people, but that's wrong, too. There is simply not a clear demographic guide to how to find these people." More important, Mavens are better consumers than most of the rest of us. In another of the typing systems, developed by the California-based SRI International, Mavens are considered to be a subcategory of the consumer type known as Fulfilled, and Fulfilleds, one SRI official told me, are "the consumers from Hell—they are very feature oriented." He explained, "They are not pushed by promotions. You can reach them, but it's an intellectual argument." As the complexity of the marketplace grows, in other words, we have responded by appointing the most skeptical and the most savvy in our midst to mediate between us and sellers. The harder stores and manufacturers work to sharpen and refine their marketing strategies, and the harder they try to read the minds of shoppers, the more we hide behind Mavens.

IMAGINE that you want to open a clothing store, men's and women's, in the upper-middle range—say, khakis at fifty dollars, dress shirts at forty dollars, sports coats and women's suits at two hundred dollars and up. The work of Paco Underhill would suggest that in order to succeed you need to pay complete and concentrated attention to the whims of your customers. What does that mean, in practical terms? Well, let's start with what's called the shopping gender gap. In the retail-store study that Paco showed me, for example, male buyers stayed an average of nine minutes and thirty-nine seconds in the store and female buyers stayed twelve minutes and fifty-seven seconds. This is not atypical. Women al-

ways shop longer than men, which is one of the major reasons that in the standard regional mall women account for seventy per cent of the dollar value of all purchases. "Women have more patience than men," Paco says. "Men are more distractible. Their tolerance level for confusion or time spent in a store is much shorter than women's." If you wanted, then, you could build a store designed for men, to try to raise that thirty-per-cent sales figure to forty or forty-five per cent. You could make the look more masculine—more metal, darker woods. You could turn up the music. You could simplify the store, put less product on the floor. "I'd go narrow and deep," says James Adams, the design director for NBBJ Retail Concepts, a division of one of the country's largest retail-design firms. "You wouldn't have fifty different cuts of pants. You'd have your four basics with lots of color. You know the Garanimals they used to do to help kids pick out clothes, where you match the giraffe top with the giraffe bottom? I'm sure every guy is like 'I wish I could get those, too.' You'd want to stick with the basics. Making sure most of the color story

goes together. That is a big deal with guys, because they are always screwing the colors up." When I asked Carrie Gennuso, the Gap's regional vice-president for New York, what she would do in an all-male store, she laughed and said, "I might do fewer displays and more signage. Big signs. Men! Smalls! Here!"

As a rule, though, you wouldn't want to cater to male customers at the expense of female ones. It's no accident that many clothing stores have a single look in both men's and women's sections, and that the quintessential nineties look—light woods, white walls—is more feminine than masculine. Women are still the shoppers in America, and the real money is to be made by making retailing styles *more* female-friendly, not less. Recently, for example, NBBJ did a project to try to increase sales of the Armstrong flooring chain. Its researchers found that the sales staff was selling the flooring based on its functional virtues—the fact that it didn't scuff, that it was long-lasting, that it didn't stain, that it was easy to clean. It was being sold by men to men, as if it were a car or a stereo. And that was the problem. "It's a wonder product techno-

A DEATH IN WINTER

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH BRODSKY

LENINGRAD, MAY 24, 1940–BROOKLYN, JANUARY 28, 1996

Delicate sensors registered the shock,
Cool scanners shuddered but went unobserved;
It was very dark, of course, the city scarved
In the sleeping death of each day's life, each clock

Reckoning that brief moment only in passing.
Historian, watchman made their careful note
Of power surges and ebbs, who's in, who's out.
At the hourly Bellevue bed check no one was missing.

But this tremor, beyond the ten-tone Richter scale,
Unsettles us more, with its quiet ultrasound,
Than cold tectonic plates, the underground
Turning of coats and strata, the old turmoil

And trepidation of societies and spheres.
Spaces are mourners. Prospect Park is the first
To cloak itself in darkness. Well rehearsed,
The Nevsky Prospect blacks out, disappears,

And before St. Mark's the whole world's living room
Empties and floats away (as the spirit does)

With its pigeons and its tiny orchestras,
While the Luxembourg's stone gentry pace and roam

In solitary grief. Time itself mourns,
Going back to the same hour as if in search,
Time and again, of bedroom, study, porch,
In nightly, demented, desperate returns,

Looking for something lost, a loss untold,
Greater than many of us understand.
In the Republic of Letters one fine hand,
Cyrillic, cursive, American, has been stilled.

Survivor of show trial, of state oppression,
Exiled from parents, language, neighborhood,
This man's was the lasting sovereignty of the word,
Beyond the grasp of politics or fashion,

The hawk's domain and climate, whose largesse
Comes as a gift of snow from the obscure
Midwinter gray in verse precise and pure.
He now dwells in the care of each of us.

Reader, dwell with his poems. Underneath
Their gaiety and music, note the chilled strain
Of irony, of felt and mastered pain,
The sound of someone laughing through clenched teeth.

—ANTHONY HECHT

logically," Adams says. "But the woman is the decision-maker on flooring, and that's not what's she's looking for. This product is about fashion, about color and design. You don't want to get too caught up in the man's way of thinking."

To appeal to men, then, retailers do subtler things. At the Banana Republic store on Fifth Avenue in midtown, the men's socks are displayed near the shoes and between men's pants and the cash register (or cash/wrap, as it is known in the trade), so that the man can grab them easily as he rushes to pay. Women's accessories are by the fitting rooms, because women are much more likely to try on pants first, and then choose an item like a belt or a bag. At the men's shirt table, the display shirts have matching ties on them—the tie table is next to it—in a grownup version of the Garanimals system. But Banana Republic would never match scarves with women's blouses or jackets. "You don't have to be that direct with women," Jeanne Jackson, the president of Banana Republic, told me. "In fact, the Banana woman is proud of her sense of style. She puts her own looks together." Jackson said she liked the Fifth

Avenue store because it's on two floors, so she can separate men's and women's sections and give men what she calls "clarity of offer," which is the peace of mind that they won't inadvertently end up in, say, women's undergarments. In a one-floor store, most retailers would rather put the menswear up front and the women's wear at the back (that is, if they weren't going to split the sexes left and right), because women don't get spooked navigating through apparel of the opposite sex, whereas men most assuredly do. (Of course, in a store like the Gap at Thirtieth and Fifth, where, Carrie Gennuso says, "I don't know if I've ever seen a man," the issue is moot. There, it's safe to put the women's wear out front.)

The next thing retailers want to do is to encourage the shopper to walk deep into the store. The trick there is to put "destination items"—basics, staples, things that people know you have and buy a lot of—at the rear of the store. Gap stores, invariably, will have denim, which is a classic destination item for them, on the back wall. Many clothing stores also

situate the cash/wrap and the fitting rooms in the rear of the store, to compel shoppers to walk back into Zone 3 or 4. In the store's prime real estate—which, given Paco's theory of the Decompression Zone and the Invariant Right, is to the right of the front entrance and five to fifteen paces in—you always put your hottest and newest merchandise, because that's where the maximum number of people will see it. Right now, in virtually every Gap in the country, the front of the store is devoted to the Gap fall look—casual combinations in black and gray, plaid shirts and jackets, sweaters, black wool and brushed-twill pants. At the Gap at Fifth Avenue and Seventeenth Street, for example, there is a fall ensemble of plaid jacket, plaid shirt, and black pants in the first prime spot, followed, three paces later, by an ensemble of gray sweater, plaid shirt, T-shirt, and black pants, followed, three paces after that, by an ensemble of plaid jacket, gray sweater, white T-shirt, and black pants. In all, three variations on the same theme, each placed so that the eye bounces naturally from the first to the second to the third, and then, inexorably, to a table deep inside Zone 1 where merchandise is arrayed and folded for petting. Every week or ten days, the combinations will change, the "look" highlighted at the front will be different, and the entryway will be transformed.

Through all of this, the store environment—the lighting, the colors, the fixtures—and the clothes have to work together. The point is not so much beauty as coherence. The clothes have to match the environment. "In the nineteen-seventies, you didn't have to have a complete wardrobe all the time," Gabriella Forte, the president and chief operating officer of Calvin Klein, says. "I think now the store has to have a complete point of view.

It has to have all the options offered, so people have choices. It's the famous one-stop shopping. People want to come in, be serviced, and go out. They want to understand the clear statement the designer is making."

At the new Versace store on Fifth Avenue, in the restored neoclassical Vanderbilt mansion, Gianni Versace says that the "statement" he is making with the elaborate mosaic and parquet floors, the marble façade and the Corinthian





"More wiggle room."

columns is "quality—my message is always a scream for quality." At her two new stores in London, Donna Karan told me, she never wants "customers to think that they are walking into a clothing store." She said, "I want them to think that they are walking into an environment, that I am transforming them out of their lives and into an experience, that it's not about clothes, it's about who they are as people." The first thing the shopper sees in her stark, all-white DKNY store is a video monitor and café: "It's about energy," Karan said, "and nourishment." In her more sophisticated, "collection" store, where the walls are black and ivory and gold, the first thing that the customer notices is the scent of a candle: "I wanted a nurturing environment where you feel that you will be taken care of." And why, at a Giorgio Armani store, is there often only a single suit in each style on display? Not because the store has only the one suit in stock but because the way the merchandise is displayed has to be consistent with the message of the designers: that Armani suits are exclusive, that the Armani customer isn't going to run into another man wearing his suit every time he goes to an art opening at Gagosian.

The best stores all have an image—or what retailers like to call a "point of

view." The flagship store for Ralph Lauren's Polo collection, for example, is in the restored Rhinelander mansion, on Madison Avenue and Seventy-second Street. The Polo Mansion, as it is known, is alive with color and artifacts that suggest a notional prewar English gentility. There are fireplaces and comfortable leather chairs and deep-red Oriental carpets and soft, thick drapes and vintage photographs and paintings of country squires and a color palette of warm crimsons and browns and greens—to the point that after you've picked out a double-breasted blazer or a cashmere sweater set or an antique silver snuffbox you feel as though you ought to venture over to Central Park for a vigorous morning of foxhunting.

The Calvin Klein flagship store, twelve blocks down Madison Avenue, on the other hand, is a vast, achingly beautiful minimalist temple, with white walls, muted lighting, soaring ceilings, gray stone flooring, and, so it seems, less merchandise in the entire store than Lauren puts in a single room. The store's architect, John Pawson, says, "People who enter are given a sense of release. They are getting away from the hustle and bustle of the street and New York. They are in a calm space. It's a modern idea of luxury, to give people space."

The first thing you see when you enter the Polo Mansion is a display of two hundred and eight sweaters, in twenty-eight colors, stacked in a haberdasher's wooden fixture, behind an antique glass counter; the first thing you see at the Klein store is a white wall, and then, if you turn to the right, four clear-glass shelves, each adorned with three solitary-looking black handbags. The Polo Mansion is an English club. The Klein store, Pawson says, is the equivalent of an art gallery, a place where "neutral space and light make a work of art look the most potent." When I visited the Polo Mansion, the stereo was playing Bobby Short. At Klein, the stereo was playing what sounded like Brian Eno. At the Polo Mansion, I was taken around by Charles Fagan, a vice-president at Polo Ralph Lauren. He wore pale-yellow socks, black loafers, tight jeans, a pale-purple polo shirt, blue old-school tie, and a brown plaid jacket—which sounds less attractive on paper than it was in reality. He

looked, in a very Ralph Lauren way, *fabulous*. He was funny and engaging and bounded through the store, keeping up a constant patter ("This room is sort of sportswear, Telluride-y, vintage"), all the while laughing and hugging people and having his freshly cut red hair tousled by the sales assistants in each section. At the Calvin Klein store, the idea that the staff—tall, austere, sombre-suited—might laugh and hug and tousle each other's hair is unthinkable. Lean over and whisper, perhaps. At the most, murmur discreetly into tiny black cellular phones. Visiting the Polo Mansion and the Calvin Klein flagship in quick succession is rather like seeing a "Howards End"—"The Seventh Seal" double feature.

Despite their differences, though, these stores are both about the same thing—communicating the point of view that shoppers are now thought to demand. At Polo, the "life style" message is so coherent and all-encompassing that the store never has the 1.33 items-per-purchase problem that Paco saw in the retailer he studied. "We have multiple purchases in excess—it's the cap, it's the tie, it's the sweater, it's the jacket, it's the pants," Fagan told me, plucking each item from its shelf and tossing it onto a tartan-covered bench seat. "People say, 'I *have* to have the belt.' It's a life-style decision."

As for the Klein store, it's really concerned with setting the tone for the Calvin Klein clothes and products sold *outside* the store—including the designer's phenomenally successful underwear line, the sales of which have grown nearly fivefold in the past two and a half years, making it one of the country's dominant brands. Calvin Klein underwear is partly a design triumph: lowering the waistband just a tad in order to elongate, and flatter, the torso. But it is also a triumph of image—transforming, as Gabriella Forte says, a “commodity good into something desirable,” turning a forgotten necessity into *fashion*. In the case of women's underwear, Bob Mazzoli, president of Calvin Klein Underwear, told me that the company “obsessed about the box being a perfect square, about the symmetry of it all, how it would feel in a woman's hand.” He added, “When you look at the boxes they are little works of art.” And the underwear itself is without any of the usual busyness—without, in Mazzoli's words, “the excessive detail” of most women's undergarments. It's a clean look, selling primarily in white, heather gray, and black. It's a look, in other words, not unlike that of the Calvin Klein flagship store, and it exemplifies the brilliance of the merchandising of the Calvin Klein image: preposterous as it may seem, once you've seen the store and worn the underwear, it's difficult not to make a connection between the two.

All this imagemaking seeks to put the shopping experience in a different context, to give it a story line. “I wish that the customers who come to my stores feel the same comfort they would entering a friend's house—that is to say, that they feel at ease, without the impression of having to deal with the ‘sanctum sanctorum’ of a designer,” Giorgio Armani told me. Armani has a house. Donna Karan has a kitchen and a womb. Ralph Lauren has a men's club. Calvin Klein has an art gallery. These are all very different points of view. What they have in common is that they have nothing to do with the actual act of shopping. (No one buys anything at a friend's house or a men's club.) Presumably, by engaging in this kind of misdirection designers aim to put us at ease, to create a kind of oasis. But perhaps they change the subject because they must, because they cannot offer an ultimate account of the shopping

experience itself. After all, what do we really know, in the end, about why people buy? We know about the Invariant Right and the Decompression Zone. We know to put destination items at the back and fashion at the front, to treat male shoppers like small children, to respect the female *derrière*, and to put the socks between the cash/wrap and the men's pants. But this is grammar; it's not prose. It is enough. But it is not much.

ONE of the best ways to understand the new humility in shopping theory is to go back to the work of William Whyte. Whyte put his cameras in parks and in the plazas in front of office buildings because he believed in the then radical notion that the design of public spaces had been turned inside out—that planners were thinking of their designs first and of people second, when they should have been thinking of people first and of design second.

In his 1980 classic, “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces,” for example, Whyte trained his cameras on a dozen or so of the public spaces and small parks around Manhattan, like the plaza in front of the General Motors Building, on Fifth Avenue, and the small park at 77 Water Street, downtown, and Paley Park, on Fifty-third Street, in order to determine why some, like the tiny Water Street park, averaged well over a hundred and fifty people during a typical sunny lunch hour and others, like the much bigger plaza at 280 Park Avenue, were almost empty. He concluded that all the things used by designers to attempt to lure people into their spaces made little or no difference. It wasn't the size of the space, or its beauty, or the presence of waterfalls, or the amount of sun, or whether a park was a narrow strip along the sidewalk or a pleasing open space. What mattered, overwhelmingly, was that there were plenty of places to sit, that the space was in some way connected to the street, and—the mystical circularity—that it was already well frequented. “What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people,” Whyte noted:

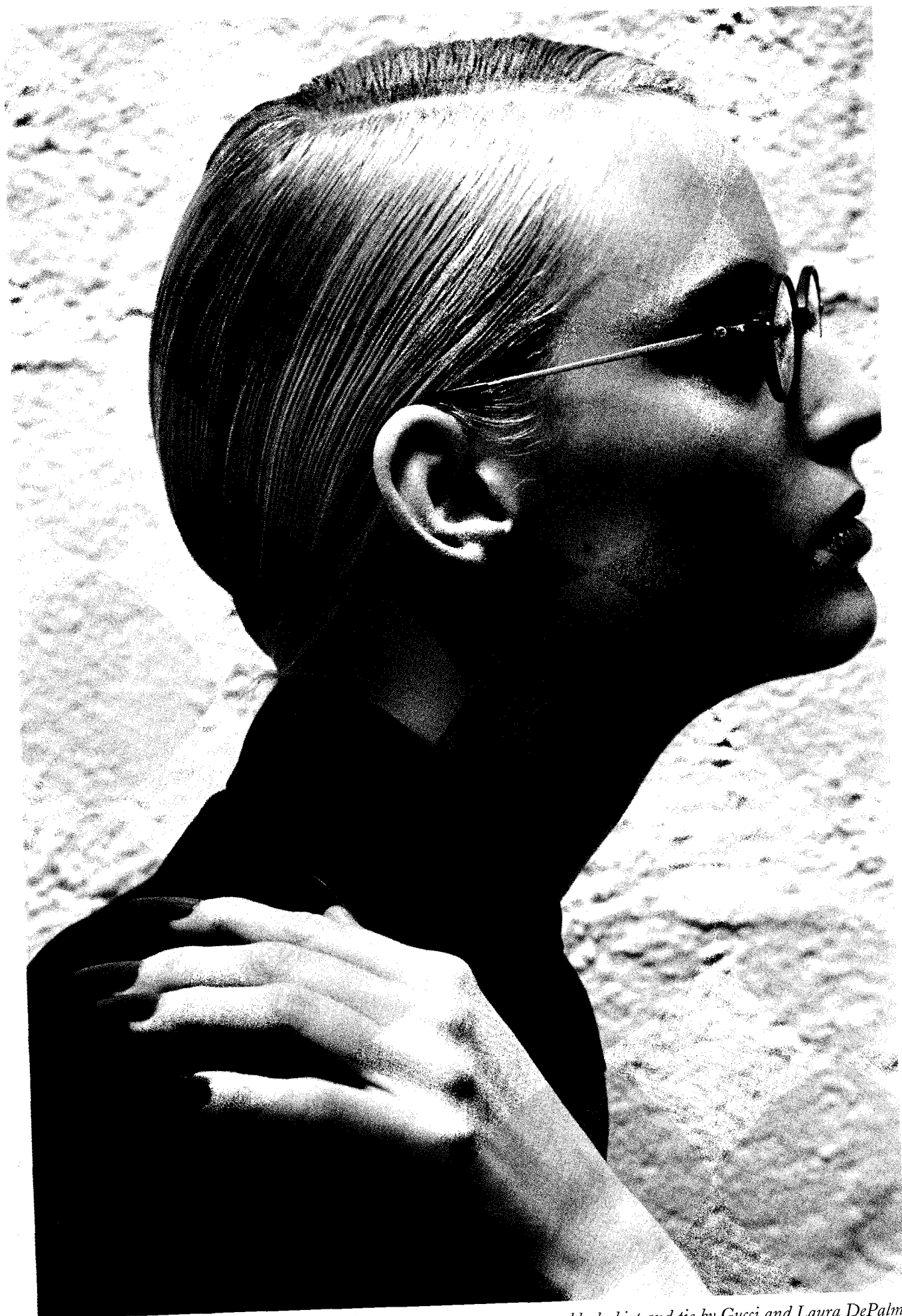
If I labor the point, it is because many urban spaces still are being designed as though the opposite were true—as though what people liked best were the places they

stay away from. People often do talk along such lines, and therefore their responses to questionnaires can be entirely misleading. How many people would say they like to sit in the middle of a crowd? Instead, they speak of “getting away from it all,” and use words like “escape,” “oasis,” “retreat.” What people *do*, however, reveals a different priority.

Whyte's conclusions demystified the question of how to make public space work. Places to sit, streets to enjoy, and people to watch turned out to be the simple and powerful rules for park designers to follow, and these rules demolished the orthodoxies and theoretical principles of conventional urban design. But in a more important sense—and it is here that Whyte's connection with Paco Underhill and retail anthropology and the stores that line Fifth and Madison is most striking—what Whyte did was to remystify the art of urban planning. He said, emphatically, that people could not be manipulated, that they would enter a public space only on their own terms, that the goal of observers like him was to find out what people wanted, not why they wanted it. Whyte, like Paco, was armed with all kinds of facts and observations about what it took to build a successful public space. He had strict views on how wide ledges had to be to lure passersby (at least thirty inches, or two backsides deep), and what the carrying capacity of prime outdoor sitting space is (total number of square feet divided by three). But, fundamentally, he was awed by the infinite complexity and the ultimate mystery of human behavior. He took people too seriously to think that he could control them. Here is Whyte, in “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces,” analyzing hours of videotape and describing what he has observed about the way men stand in public. He's talking about feet. He could just as easily be talking about shopping:



Foot movements . . . seem to be a silent language. Often, in a schmoozing group, no one will be saying anything. Men stand bound in amiable silence, surveying the passing scene. Then, slowly, rhythmically, one of the men rocks up and down; first on the ball of the foot, then back on the heel. He stops. Another man starts the same movement. Sometimes there are reciprocal gestures. One man makes a half turn to the right. Then, after a rhythmic interval, another responds with a half turn to the left. Some kind of communication seems to be taking place here, but I've never broken the code. ♦



FANTASY PAIR BY HELMUT NEWTON *Amy Wesson wears a black shirt and tie by Gucci and Laura DePalma*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

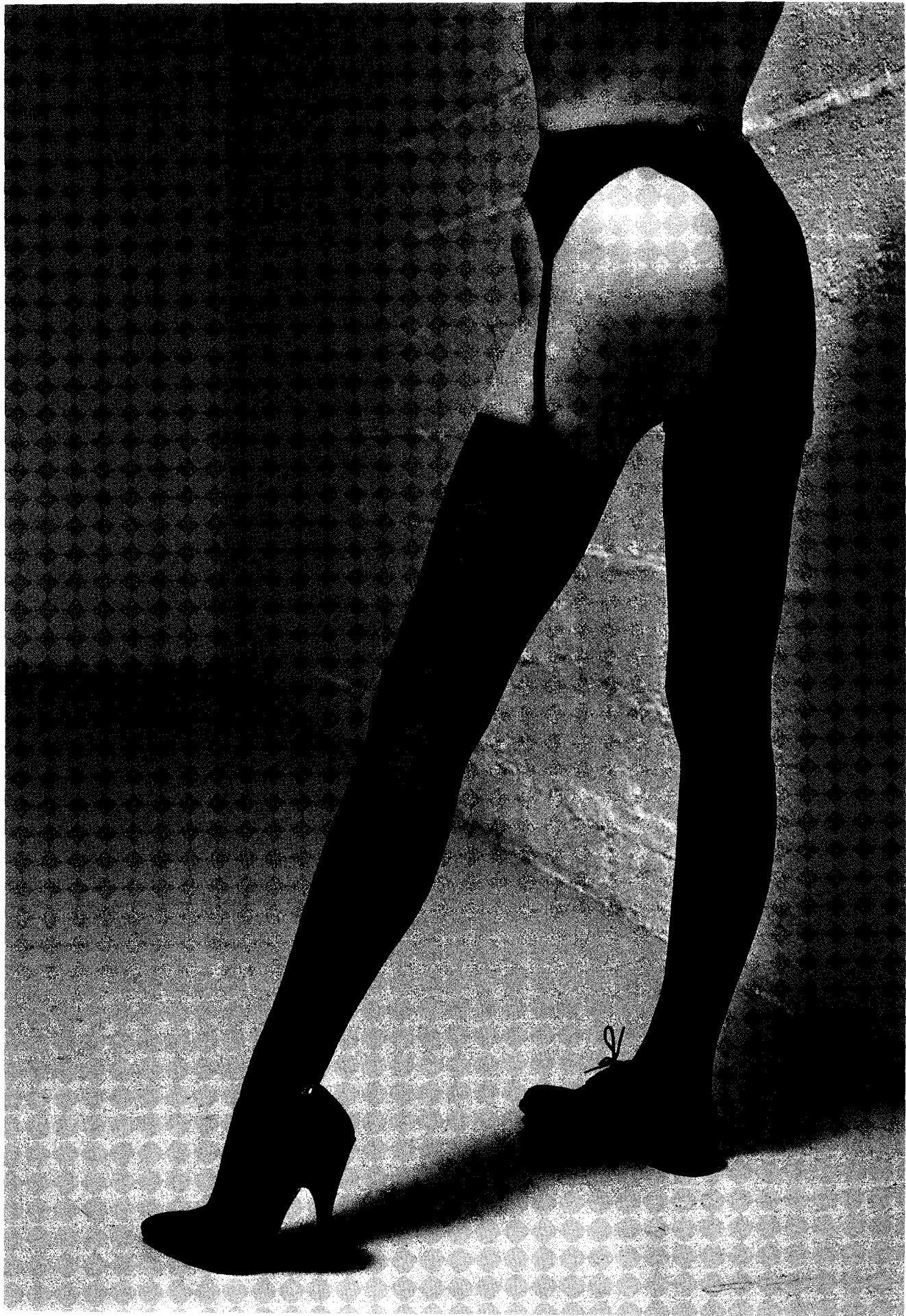


ther-and-veil scarf by Chanel Haute Couture. Styled by Nicoletta Santoro; makeup, Susan Sterling; hair, Madeleine Cofano.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Left: Amy Wesson examines an ensemble by Gaultier. Right: On her right, Laura DePalma has on underwear by Calvin Klein, tights by Wolfi



' shoes by J. M. Weston; on her left, underwear and suspenders by Chantal Thomass, stockings by Christian Dior, and high heels by Phyllia.

ANNALS OF APPEARANCE

A LESSON IN STYLE

In Japan, the author learns why some women inherently know what looks best.

BY HERBERT MUSCHAMP

I AM *not at all* interested in fashion," the sixty-seven-year-old sculptor Aiko Miyawaki pronounces with dreadful finality. As if to prove the point, she wears the same outfit throughout the three days we spend travelling together. Miyawaki and I have been friends for eleven years, but this is my first visit to her native Japan, and she has made it her mission to extricate me from Tokyo and show me other parts of the country. We meet in Osaka, sprint through the landscape, and eventually touch down in Kyoto, where Miyawaki guides me through a jet-lagged, somnambulant dream of temples and gardens.

I have a mission, too. I want to write about Miyawaki's remarkable sense of style. Though she is cordial, Miyawaki does not conceal her distaste for my idea. Throughout our trip, she peppers me with discouragement: "But this coat is more than ten years old!" "I wear what is practical and comfortable." "In Paris, they always say, 'Mme. Miyawaki, why do you never go shopping?'"

As a woman, and an artist of independent spirit, Miyawaki is right to pour cold water on a journalist who threatens to reduce her to a "woman of style." Yet one look at her is enough to transform each of her objections into a lesson in style: Why shouldn't a ten-year-old coat be fashion? Who says fashion can't be practical? Fashion is just a name for one of the things that happen where mind and body intersect. Fashion is more than an outfit that glides down a runway, poses for *Vogue*, and disappears after one season. It is also worth examining as the physical intelligence some women project when draped.

I MET Miyawaki in 1985, at a party in New York which was being held in honor of her husband, the architect Arata Isozaki: he had just designed the Palladium discothèque. The couple arrived

late, looking unapproachably regal. Miyawaki wore a long black dress with a wide sash draped over one shoulder. She insists that the sash was gray. I am certain it was red—memory's way, I guess, of punching up the already vivid impression she made. In fact, the couple *are* royalty—cultural monarchs. Miyawaki's husband is one of the world's most esteemed architects, and she is a prominent artist, celebrated for the metal sculptures she calls "Utsurohi," which is Japanese for "a moment of movement." Made from stainless-steel cables of the kind used to support bridges, the sculptures are anchored to metal plates at both ends and arc lyrically into the air. They bob on breezes. A touch of the hand sets them aquiver. From even a short distance, they look delicate. Come closer, and you recoil from their tensile strength. Should a cable snap free of its anchor, it could slice your head off.

Miyawaki was born in Tokyo, but she grew up in a spa town called Atami, on the Izu Peninsula, where artists and writers like to live. Her parents were not artists—her father was a businessman—but her sister-in-law was a painter, and Miyawaki studied art history at a women's university in Tokyo. In the early sixties, she lived in the West, moving from New York to Milan and then to Paris. While struggling to find her artistic vision (for a time she worked primarily as a painter), she befriended prominent Western artists, including Man Ray ("He was like my father," she says), Jasper Johns, and Marcel Duchamp. The West had made her a cosmopolite by the time she returned to Japan, in 1966; that same year, she met Isozaki at an exhibition of his work.

Miyawaki's cosmopolitanism is deceptive, however. One day in 1986, I met her at the Carlyle Hotel, and we walked down Madison Avenue to the gallery where a show of her work was about to

open. Halfway there, a Japanese acquaintance of Miyawaki's approached us on the sidewalk. The two women looked at each other, stopped, and went into a deep, formal bow. I assumed that Miyawaki was playing a prank: I looked over at her, expecting that we would share a laugh at this sendup of ancient custom. But I didn't recognize the person I saw. Her face had frozen into a mask. It wore a different smile. The eyes, though open, were shut. The city receded. Miyawaki's bow was not synchronized to New York time.

In Japan, I realize that Miyawaki's formality is a kind of intimacy. She is modernized but not Westernized. (It's reassuring to know that the two are not synonymous.) My first dinner with her, at an elegant restaurant in Osaka, produces a succession of dishes unlike anything I have ever tasted in New York. Here, for instance, are the season's first chestnuts, simply charred and served on a bed of pine needles. The dish is presented with reverence, as if it were a diamond tiara resting on a velvet cushion. Then there is the cricket. After three courses, a flower arrangement is set on the table. Presently, there comes a chirp. I assume the sound to be Miyawaki's cellular phone, and am greatly flattered that she chooses not to answer it. It takes three or four chirps for me to realize that someone has managed to find the world's smallest cricket and has concealed it within the flowers, where it serenades us with the sound of old Japan.

That was an introduction. At the end of three days, I have come to feel that the cultural losses that followed the Second World War were in many ways more marked in the West than in Japan. This awareness comes less from the sites Miyawaki has shown me than from the way she moves through them: her expression as she lights a candle in the temple of the thousand and one Buddhas; the

nearly imperceptible movement with which she slips her shoes off and back on at the doorway to each temple; the endurance that allows her, in the presence of a Zen priest, to keep her wool coat on while I, on the verge of fainting in the hot, humid air, don't wait for permission to shed my poplin jacket.

HERE is what she wears: a pin-striped jacket of dark-gray wool, with wide, sharply notched lapels, that reaches nearly to her knees. In the back, a buckled belt cinches the jacket into something resembling an officer's coat. Under it, a black silk short-sleeved turtleneck shirt. Black stretch-velvet leggings. Black calfskin shoes with thin rubber soles, their heels barely thicker than two slices of melba toast. Thin charcoal socks, ribbed. A black leather belt. Clipped to the belt is a pedometer, to measure the thousand steps she insists on taking each day. A black straw hat—wide-brimmed, featherlight. A short scarf of navy-blue silk with large yellow dots.

The costume is demonstrably practical: one evening before retiring, Miyawaki regales me with a series of smoothly executed yoga stretches. Versatile, too. The hat, the scarf, and the jacket come off and on in various combinations, creating a range of roles: world traveller; smartly tailored businesswoman; little old Japanese lady walking in the rain.

The jacket, shirt, pants, and belt were all designed by Issey Miyake, a close friend of Miyawaki's for many years. She gives me the impression that the clothes she wears have magically materialized in her closet. To some extent, this may be true. When I call on Miyake, the designer shows me a picture of a surprise he is creating for Miyawaki—a dress for her

to wear at the October opening of a show of her early paintings at the Tokyo Hara Museum. It is a black version of a famous Miyake garment, the Flying Saucer dress that he designed in 1994. It would require a certain imagination to consider this dress either practical or comfortable.



Aiko Miyawaki projects a physical intelligence when draped.

It turns the wearer into a tall Noguchi lamp, to which she must contribute her own incandescence. You wouldn't want to sit down in it, even if you could. But do artists ever sit down at their openings?

TO my eyes, what Miyake designs makes kaleidoscopically changing references to classical Greek, medieval Japanese, and American pop sources, and bears as much resemblance to fashion as the famous fifteenth-century rock garden at Kyoto's Ryoan-ji temple bears to gardening. Pants suits adapted from Japanese workers' uniforms; hard-edged

shirts of intense, abstract-modernist color; Fortuny-from-outer-space gowns of gossamer synthetics: Miyake makes fashion by appearing to stand well outside it. But he is not the only designer who enables women to feel that their taste transcends fashion. That's

the paradox of designer clothes. Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Isaac Mizrahi, Rei Kawakubo, Miuccia Prada, and Giorgio Armani can all claim legions of followers who will tell you that they are "not at all" interested in fashion. And they're not being untruthful. They don't read fashion magazines; they don't follow the couture. They've simply found a designer that fits their taste.

Men have long been accustomed to that kind of detachment. A man who shops at Brooks Brothers enjoys complete denial of any interest in fashion. He will buy the same button-down shirts, the same pin-striped wool suits that his father and grandfather wore before him. Power still accrues to that denial. That is, part of being "not interested in fashion" is the desire to shed associations that were once integral to female identity: frivolity, triviality, the willingness to be an object.

Miyawaki's case is more complicated. The collapse of the polarity between East and West is as fundamental to her identity as the erosion of distinctions between male and female. Her dress is like a cross-axis chart, with the axis of gender running from top to bottom and that of ethnicity from side to side. She is, by turns, a male geisha, a female samurai, a flight attendant, and a pilot. Which is to say that fluidity is the active ingredient of Miyawaki's style. Man Ray captured this quality in a photograph he took of her in 1962, posed as the Mona Lisa. Looking at it now, she says, "Oh, it was just a parody!" I can't tell whether this dis-

missiveness comes from modesty about her beauty or from humility about her place in the history of art to which da Vinci and Man Ray belong. Or maybe she is simply expressing her fear of being pinned down.

WE are sitting on a ledge at Ryoan-ji, looking into the rock garden. Miyawaki often came here as a student, in the early postwar years, long before it became a top-ten tourist attraction. She would sit here and imagine that she was listening to Beethoven. Now I see that Miyawaki, in her plain dark uniform, is dressed as a shadow—indeed, a shade, which I know she partly feels herself to be. She was found to have cancer in 1972, and was given a year to live. She designed a tombstone for herself: a small wedge of black granite, its highly polished surface inscribed enigmatically, in English, “Listen to your portrait.” The stone now sits on the floor in a corner of her Tokyo studio, a memento mori that could easily be mistaken for a doorstep.

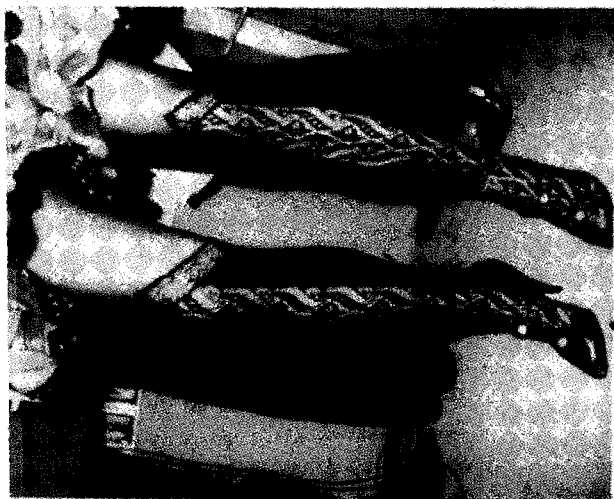
“Do you ever think of death?” she asks as we walk through a light drizzle toward another garden—the moss garden inside Koto-in, a small temple in the Daitoku-ji complex. Less celebrated than Ryoan-ji, it is more exquisite, because you cannot distinguish what is natural from what is cultivated, or come away believing that the distinction matters much. “Arata and I think this is the most beautiful place in Japan,” she remarks. Then she points to a wall at one end of the garden. “Over there is the cemetery. That’s where you will visit us.” In this still place, a burial plot is as much a part of life as a cypress or a bamboo. With a smile in her voice, Miyawaki points out her tomb as if it were a particularly lovely corner of the garden.

DIANA VREELAND once described *Vogue* as “the myth of the next reality.” That’s one way I would define Miyawaki’s style. She dresses for a time that has speeded up so rapidly that fashion can no longer keep pace. It stands still, or willingly drifts backward. Fashion is a ten-year-old coat. A freshly cut version of a two-year-old dress. A deep bow that stops time. (“James Dean wore khakis.” “Leonard Bernstein wore khakis.”) Fashion has a recurring dream of itself—that it should go out of fashion, have an after-life, become a shroud. Of course, this is my myth. I don’t claim that it’s Miyawaki’s. But it was she who invited me to ponder my portrait in her tombstone. ♦

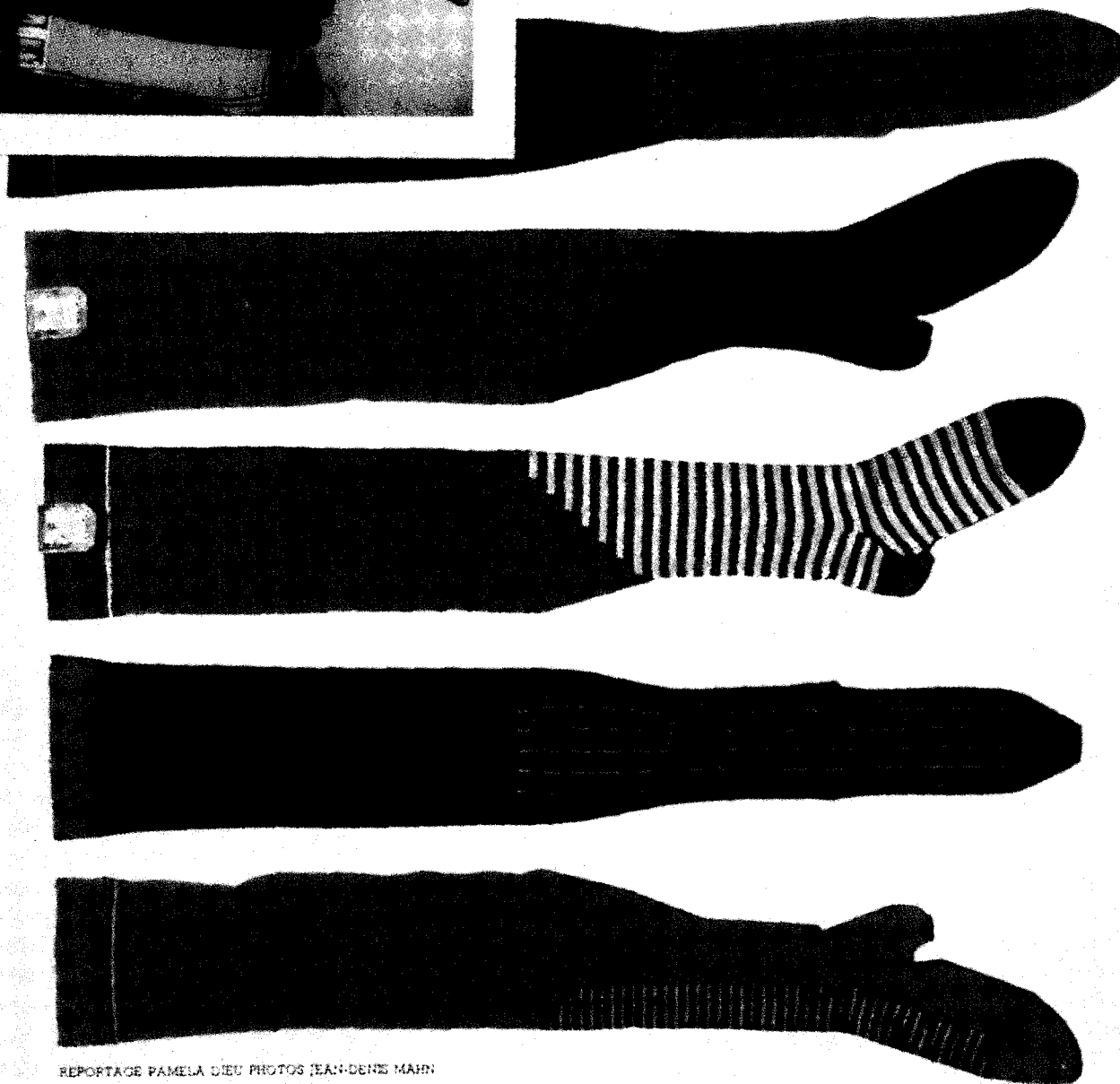
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE UK BY THAMES & HUDSON, LONDON



DESIGNER NOTES In “Christian Lacroix: The Diary of a Collection,” about to be published over-the-knee socks, photographed by Jean-Denis Mahn for the magazine 100 Idées; and (ins



LACROIX



REPORTAGE PAMELA DIEU PHOTOS (JEAN-DENIS MAIR)

f faire es. - je ch3 le Bow de 1880.

Simon & Schuster, the French couturier documents the process by which he comes up with a collection. His visual jottings include (above) 's worn by Shalom Harlow and photographed by Roxanne Lowit; and (left) self-portraits, in a Directoire mode, by Pierre and Gilles.

A CRITIC AT LARGE

PROPHETS OF SEDUCTION

How the great couturiers Christian Dior and Yves Saint Laurent captured the desires of their times—and were captured by them.

BY FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY

PARIS, MAISON DIOR, February 12, 1947: Out stepped the models, walking very fast, whirling in the crowded room with provocative swinging movements, knocking over ashtrays with the huge flare of their skirts as the name of each outfit was announced—*Amoureuse*, *Pompon*, *Caprice*. The women attending Christian Dior's first New Look collection, who were wearing the frugal clothes imposed on them since the war years—short, narrow skirts and boxy jackets—started applauding early in the show and kept on applauding right through the final ovation. They were being treated to an opulent femininity that had not been seen in fashion for many years: sumptuous excesses of fabric; luxuriously wide hemlines swooping to eight inches below the knee; soft-shouldered, full-bosomed tops accentuating tiny, cinched-in waists.

After the performance, the audience clamored to meet the collection's little-known designer—Christian Dior, a baldish, portly forty-two-year-old with a sad little smile, who resembled, in the words of one of his friends, "a bland country curate made out of pink marzipan." The praise lavished on this shy, reclusive Frenchman was unequalled in the history of dressmaking: an American fan described Dior as "a Napoleon, an Alexander the Great, a Caesar of the couture." *Harper's Bazaar's* Carmel Snow, who coined the term New Look, declared, "Dior saved Paris as Paris was saved in the Battle of the Marne." The demand for garments was so enormous that for some time the salon at 30 Avenue Montaigne had to be kept open past midnight. "My God, what have I done?" Dior exclaimed to an associate shortly af-

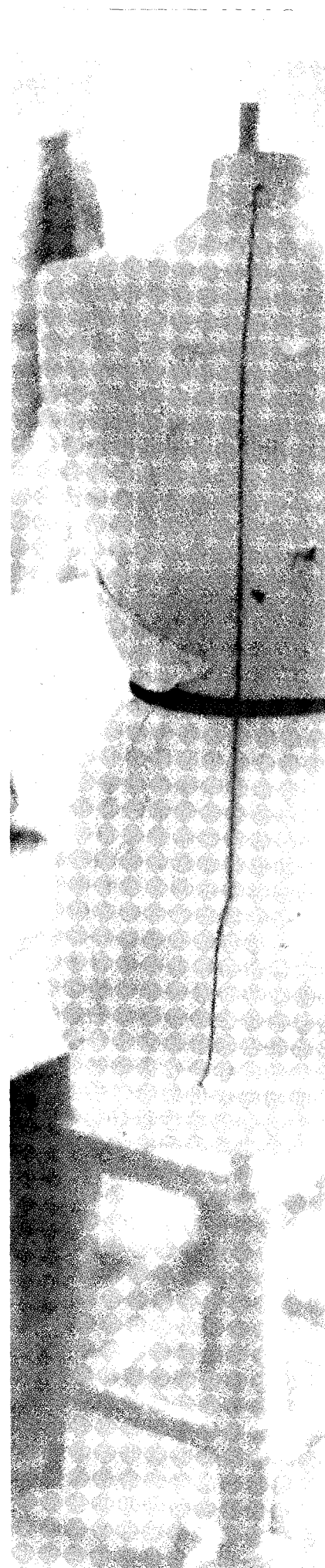
ter his first showing, and he burst into tears.

His winter collection, held in August of that year, featured gowns whose wasp-waisted skirts measured as much as forty yards in circumference, and it drew the same acclaim. The designer was to repeat this kind of ecstatic success twice a year for a decade—until the eve of his death. He dressed the world's most glamorous women: Rita Hayworth, Zizi Jeanmaire, Olivia de Havilland, Marlene Dietrich. Crowds of hundreds met him at airports as he travelled through Europe and the Americas, opening boutiques and publicizing his perfumes. (For decades, Miss Dior would remain one of the best-selling fragrances in the world.) In 1949, seventy-five per cent of all French fashion exports bore Dior labels, and Dior products amounted to five per cent of the total volume of French export sales.

NEARLY a half century after Dior's initial triumph, I sit in a store-room of the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute, admiring a creation of his called *Chérie*. It is a cocktail dress of very thin navy-blue taffeta—the most ethereal blue imaginable, only a speck darker than the iridescent plumage of a pheasant's neck. A pivotal model of Dior's 1947 collection, it has a demurely simple, round-bosomed top and a skirt made of thirteen-and-a-half yards of that luminous blue taffeta; the fabric, knife-pleated and tucked into *Chérie's* twenty-inch waist with wizardly craftsmanship, flares into a huge circular hemline, which gives the outfit the shape of an inverted Martini glass.

Chérie is currently being readied for an exhibition, to open on December 12th

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON
Workroom at the House of Dior, Paris, 1947.





ON THE STREET

BLAND AMBITION

I'VE been away from New York for five years. On my return, I am shocked by the city's new squeaky-cleaness. New York exceptionalism—exceptionally dangerous, exceptionally grouchy, exceptionally dirty—has been replaced by a well-scrubbed homogeneity. Suddenly, Manhattanites are importing trends invented in outer America. Irish bars have given way to Seattle coffee bars. Police officers in shorts are patrolling on mountain bikes. A new K mart arrows the heart of midtown. At SoHo openings, there are more toddlers than artists, and the toddlers are wearing Gap: family values rule.

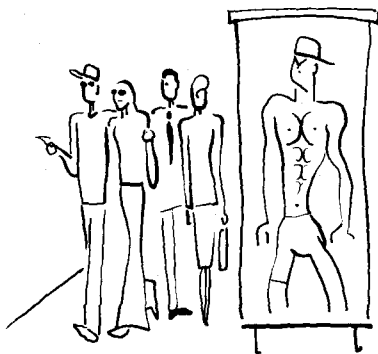
Fashion—now more than ever New York's defining industry—appears to have gone populist. In fashion-ad supplements as thick and juicy as penny dreadfuls, a white-bread goofiness reigns. You see a bucktoothed nerd sitting on an unmade bed. You see a freckled girl with a dainty little First Communion cross around her neck. You see zits, you see braces, you see Coke-bottle specs, you see bird-chested boys who look like the kid in the Charles Atlas comic strip when he was still getting sand kicked in his face. The only thing un-average about these Americans is that they are twenty years younger and ninety pounds lighter than the people who are likely to be buying the clothes they're modelling.

This new race of underdogs smeared across subway stations and the sides of New York buses, normal misfits who have serendipitously become fashion icons, represents the rag-trade equivalent of those working citizens whose histories campaigning politicians invoke—the coached moms and dads who ascended the podium at the Republican Convention to recite, "I am

part of the American family." The ingratiating normality of the models is matched only by the normality of the sweatpants and sneakers they're hawking. "Fashion" is no longer something rarefied, labor-intensive, exclusionary: it is our lingua franca. New York City garbage collectors wear T-shirts that—in what looks like a pun on Donna Karan's logo—say "DSNY." High fashion is what Fruit of the Loom and Oshkosh B'gosh deliver cheap.

The week of my homecoming, the big news has been the unveiling of an Armani flagship store on Madison Avenue. In newspaper interviews, Armani confides that he has become more friendly, more forthcoming. His clothes in the store window likewise appear more forthcoming: minimalist beige has intermarried with pink and blue. I meet an old school friend who teaches college English. Over a cup of coffee at a Starbucks on her block, she utters a familiar complaint: her twenty-year-old students are very pleasant, but they have no interest in ideas. Politics, literary theory, the clash of warring universals died before these kids bought their first pair of Rollerblades. What has replaced ideology in our contemporary pantheon? Life style. Frappuccino, moccaccino, cybercino. In-line gelato and on-line gelato. Software and sportswear. New York may have become homogenized by all-American imports, but the good news is that the mainstream itself is now funkier. The Gap girl wearing a cross tells me, The old American covenant of assimilationism has been superseded. You no longer have to renounce your ethnic or sexual or religious particularity in order to make it. The life style that fashion celebrates is so omnivorous it can even handle Jesus.

—FERNANDA EBERSTADT



at the Costume Institute, that will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Christian Dior's New Look. And as I examined its cunning styling—the minuscule waistband that so ably exaggerates the fullness of bust and padded hips—I was filled with ambivalent emotions of recollected pleasure and stern reproach. It was not so much the archaic coquetry of the dress I was questioning as, rather, the collective past self of my generation: the high-school and college girls of the early nineteen-fifties who had enthusiastically capitulated to the Dior style; who had laced themselves, groaning, into the torturous waist cinches demanded by the likes of Chérie; and who had turned their backs on almost five decades of fashion that had gradually unfettered women's bodies.

For just think of the liberating styles that preceded Dior's counter-revolution: the abolition of corsets which was championed by the suffragette movement and was pioneered, as far back as 1906, by Poiret; the athletic androgyny expressed in the flapper look of the nineteen-twenties; the novel image of the working woman incarnated in the fluid, casual clothes of the visionary Chanel. All these tokens of emancipation had been cancelled overnight by a so-called New Look, which in fact turned out to be the dumbest misnomer in the history of finery. It turned the clock back to the restrictive folderol of La Belle Époque, and evoked alarmingly regressive models of femaleness: women as passive sex objects, displayers of their men's wealth and status—women who needed to be helped into cabs, who required huge trunks in order to travel with their finery, and maids to help them dress. Dior's first collections included daytime outfits that weighed eight pounds and evening dresses that weighed sixty and were said by their wearers to be too heavy even to dance in. How could we have ever submitted to such nonsense? the feminist in me was now raging.

But very soon my annoyance gave way to a wistful compassion. I realized that as my peers and I admired Dior's New Look in our mothers' magazines, and later recaptured our great-grandmothers' art of breathing in while lacing ourselves into hourglass shapes, we did not yet have the perspective to feel any qualms about its message. Indeed, in the nineteen-

fifties we were aware of only one dimension of the Dior craze: its exacerbated femininity sprang from Dior's desire to return French style to its "traditions of great luxury." Luxury in 1947 was both a form of exorcism and an economic imperative: exorcism of the privations and constraints imposed upon the West by the Second World War, and an ambitious attempt to restore France to its centuries-old role of the capital of Western style. As Dior himself suggested, a tad flippantly, "Europe had tired of dropping bombs and now wanted to let off a few fireworks."

That triumphant aspect of Dior's 1947 spectacle was obvious to anyone who knew the difference between de Gaulle and John Wayne. But how many of us, in those days, could have grappled with the more complex historical issues that were haunting me during my recent visit to the Costume Institute? The urge to reinforce gender differences and to regress to docile, domestic models of womanhood, I realized, has often reappeared after times of communal crisis. Moreover, if couturiers, like poets, express the subconscious longings of their peers, France's particularly tricky record of collaboration may have been all the more conducive to a nostalgia for a safely *distant* past: the guiltless hedonism of La Belle Époque was an ideally soothing choice.

Such were some of the thoughts that came to me this fall, as I examined Chérie and other memorable pieces of Dior's first collections, such as the cocktail outfit called Bar, an exuberantly peplumed ivory shantung jacket topping a ten-yard swoop of finely pleated black wool, or Venus, a strapless, tightly corseted ball gown of sequined dove-gray tulle descending into falls of multilayered, scallop-shaped flounces. These are some of the sublimely ephemeral garments that catapulted a modest, retiring Frenchman to such swift fame that by 1949 a Gallup poll ranked Dior as one of the five most famous people in the world.

THE Metropolitan Museum's retrospective "Christian Dior" coincides with the publication of Marie-France Pochna's biography "Christian Dior: The Man Who Made the World Look New," translated from the French by Joanna Savill (Arcade; \$25.95). Notwithstanding the stunning naïveté of its subtitle, this

book successfully chronicles the private life and public glory of the mid-century's most famous Frenchman.

He was born in 1905 in Granville, Normandy, the son of a prominent fertilizer magnate. ("It smells of Dior today," townsfolk would remark.) From his boyhood on, he adored fashion, was profoundly attached to his elegant, beautiful mother, and in adolescence was happiest when sketching dresses for his women friends.

In Christian's late teens, Dior *père* adamantly vetoed his son's wish to pursue a vocation in the arts. Then, after Christian, with the halfhearted notion of becoming a diplomat, gratified his family by spending a few years at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, M. Dior agreed to subsidize a small gallery in which his son could satisfy his passion for contemporary art. But in the early nineteen-thirties Dior's father lost all his money, and Christian had to earn a living. He worked briefly as a fashion illustrator and then found employment as a designer with Robert Piguet, a popular couturier now best remembered for his heady perfume Fracas.

In 1939, the war and Army conscription briefly interrupted Dior's bright career in couture. Upon returning to Paris, in 1941, he was hired as a designer by Lucien Lelong; within a few years, he had so radically rejuvenated Lelong's styles that an American editor returning to Europe to cover the collections asked to meet the bright new star behind the scenes. Her enthusiasm heightened Dior's hopes of opening his own couture house. An immensely wealthy backer took interest—the textile magnate Marcel Boussac. Dior's nascent enterprise, which thrived on a lavish use of fabric, was founded in a spacious town house at 30 Avenue Montaigne, where it stands to this day.

WHILE working for *Elle* in Paris in the nineteen-fifties, I occasionally met Dior at his couture house and at social gatherings. I remember the way his plump pink head doddered gently from side to side as he talked, the way he folded his hands over his belly, like a meek Benedictine monk, as he listened to you intently. Equally memorable was his aura of selfless modesty and kindness. He was legendary for the democratic courtliness he displayed toward his hundreds

of employees: he spent months choosing the right Christmas gift for each one of them, and he always stepped aside with a small bow to allow the lowliest apprentice to enter the elevator before him. Equally unchanging were his idiosyncrasies: an incurable lust for large quantities of very rich food; a constant need to be surrounded by a small circle of intimates, which included Jean Cocteau, Christian Bérard, the composers Georges Auric and Francis Poulenc, and Raymonde Zehnacker, the *directrice* of his design studio; and an obsessive reliance on a noted Paris clairvoyant, Mme. Delahaye. It was Mme. Delahaye who advised him to accept Boussac's offer to fund his couture house, and through the years she went on to forecast the most propitious dates for his travels, and even which Paris florist should create the lavish bouquets he craved for his salon and his homes.

"The press covers Dior as if he were a war" was a statement often heard during the nineteen-fifties. One of the paradoxes of the Dior phenomenon, well described by his biographer, was that this mild-mannered, very private man attracted notice more skillfully than the most aggressive publicity hound. The innovations he brought to couture had less to do with his designs than with his showmanship. He pioneered a brand-new way of presenting clothes, and set a radical new pace of stylistic change. During my stint at *Elle*, I never fantasized about owning a Dior gown; compared with the regal Balenciagas and delectably supple Chaneels that I secretly craved, his clothes struck me as archaically "*seizième*" and "*Dadame*," euphemisms for "ultra-decorous" and "dowdy." But I was continually dazzled by the sheer theatricality of his presentations: the liturgical drama of his hushed, pale-gray-and-gilt salon redolent of the hot, dry smell of Diorissimo: the zip and pace and seductiveness with which his models strutted through the room as the name of each invention was called out—"Numéro Un, Verdi!" "Numéro Deux, Pergolesi!" "Numéro Trois, Wagner!" These two-hour spectacles, which broke sharply with the demure, slow-paced couture showings of prewar days, were the forerunners of today's raucous catwalk extravaganzas. After the traditional bridal-gown finale, the Master would part the gray velvet curtain of the *cabine* and wave shyly to his vociferous fans. "Sub-

lime!" they would call out. "The best you've ever done!" He never once let them down.

Equally crucial to Dior's genius as a publicist and showman (King Barnum, some called him) was the velocity of his transformations. He was the first designer to alter hemlines and basic shapes radically from one collection to the next, thus forcing his fashions to go *out* of fashion each year, and creating an unprecedented rush of headlines and consumer frenzy. He gave the press an extra hook by inventing a catchphrase for each of his collections: the 1947 Corolla line was followed by the Sinuous line, the Oblique line, the Tulip line, the H line, the particularly popular A line—a softly flaring shape described by *Vogue* as "the prettiest triangle since Pythagoras."

These relentless innovations were bound to make some enemies. The Diorophobia provoked by "THE GREAT HEM-LINE HULLABALOO" or "THE BATTLE OF

THE BARE CALF," as the press billed two of his semiannual mutations, was particularly rampant among American men. An indignant male from Idaho accused him of having "disfigured my wife." "Stay out of Topeka, you bum," another irate gent, in Kansas, wrote. There was also dissent from a few of his colleagues. The habitually aloof Balenciaga admitted that he was appalled by the way Dior treated textiles—backing them with multi-layers of canvas, buckram, or tulle, rather than "letting fabric speak for itself," which was the pith of his own aesthetic credo. But the most violent censure of all came from Chanel, who declared, "Dior? He doesn't dress women, he upholsters them."

MARIE-FRANCE POCHNA is too young to have experienced the Dior phenomenon at first hand and is too culturally naïve to catch the misogynist ironies of the so-called New Look. She is

also a tireless name-dropper, rattling off Dior's rich and famous friends with the breathless elation of a starstruck farm girl. Yet her book, despite its frequent gaucheries, is well documented, and it is particularly eloquent on the manner of Dior's creative process.

Every male designer seems to have a particular Muse, an ideal woman for whom he designs his fantasies. Pochna argues convincingly that Dior's Muse was his fastidiously elegant mother, the haunting beauty in rustling skirts who kissed him good night in the early years of the century. His entire oeuvre, the author intimates, was a form of Oedipal regression, re-creating not only his mother but all those women "muffled in furs, with gestures à la Boldini," who had left him with "the memory of their perfumes."

With equal sensitivity, Pochna describes the anxiety that Dior experienced during those two successive periods of each year when he prepared his collections. For the first several days, he shut himself up in the study of one of his country houses, near Fontainebleau or in Provence, seeing no one except a domestic who brought him his meals on a tray. Sitting at a desk, Dior drew tentative outlines on a large pad: indulging in a kind of hieroglyphic reverie, he doodled aimlessly until a moment came when he suddenly had a "flash" that revealed the principal silhouette of his next collection. During these anguished days, half a dozen of his assistants would sit downstairs, waiting nervously for his reappearance. When, at last, he came out of his quarters, holding hundreds of sheets of paper, they cheered and then carefully perused his handiwork.

Obsessive perfectionism is needed by any great couturier—in this art of nuances a quarter inch can spell the difference between a triumph and a disaster—and that is taxing enough. But another of Dior's revolutions was to internationalize fashion. Within a few years of his first triumph, Dior salons flourished in London, New York, and Caracas, and Dior felt impelled to evolve scores of designs specifically suited to each of them, taking into account the cultural propensities and the average bodily proportions of his clients abroad. In short, Maison Dior had to create around a thousand designs a year.

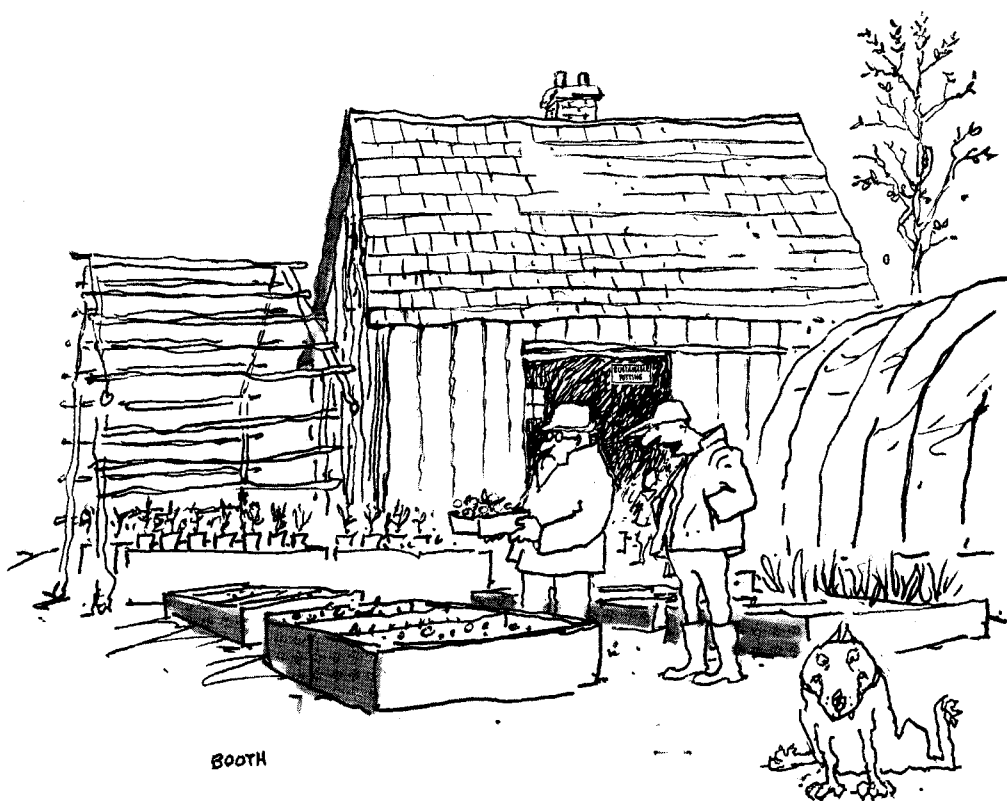


"You get in, but no skybox."

This schedule must have been especially draining for a designer who strove to create a wholly different "look" each season. Dior's health was destroyed, in part, by that very Frankenstein of worldwide novelty which he had created. By the mid-nineteen-fifties, he was showing severe signs of stress. The large domestic staff that took care of his homes had to wear soft felt slippers in order to maintain perfect silence. At times, the couturier's nerves were so fragile that his clairvoyant and his chauffeur, a long discarded lover of his youth named Perrotino, had to drive him repeatedly around the block before he dared enter his salon on the Avenue Montaigne. His *directrice*, Mme. Raymonde, was sometimes wakened in the middle of the night by a call from her employer: he would be sobbing like a child.

Outsiders, though, noticed little change in Dior beyond his expanding waistline. Only Perrotino knew Dior's darkest secret: Dior had had two mild heart attacks since 1946. And there was another secret: over the previous decade Dior's love life had been disastrous. Numerous desirable young men had refused to offer him anything more than devoted friendship. Finally, in 1956, a handsome youth of North African descent, Jacques Benita, returned Dior's affection. The consummately formal Dior became so besottedly enamored that he was seen holding his lover's hand in public. It was in order to be more desirable to his sweetheart that in the late summer of 1957 Dior planned a trip to Montecatini, Italy, to take a thinning cure.

In mid-September, Mme. Delahaye saw bad auguries in his cards and was vehement that he cancel his travel plans. Dior was equally resolute about taking his thinning cure, and, for perhaps the first time in his life, he acted against his clairvoyant's advice. He was accompanied to the spa at Montecatini by his chauffeur, Mme. Raymonde, and a young goddaughter. On the tenth day of his stay, in the after-dinner hours of October 23, 1957, Dior collapsed and died, shortly after a canasta game. This



*"She took the house, the money, the Mercedes, and the Rottweiler.
Then she took a hammer and busted the still."*

genial, prolific, much revered man was fifty-two years old. His career had lasted barely a decade.

Maison Dior, three months later, January 30, 1958. A tall, skinny, bespectacled twenty-one-year-old stands on the balcony of 30 Avenue Montaigne, shyly waving to the crowd below. Cars are double-parked on both sides of the pavement. The paparazzi are out in full, along with scores of Parisians, who have gathered to inquire about what would be one of the biggest media events held in France that year—the first collection designed for the Maison by Dior's former assistant, Yves Saint Laurent.

Earlier that day, the mood of the audience at the Dior salon was even more frenzied than it had been at the 1947 collection. Could "a child of twenty-one," as many Parisians referred to Saint Laurent, possibly rescue the French economy by sustaining the allure of the century's most famous couturier? It was immediately obvious that he could. The applause began as soon as his very first models strode out, wearing relaxed day dresses that hovered

comfortably at the knee; slim, sensible suits; romantic ballerina-style ball gowns. Saint Laurent instantly reassured the public by blending the opulence and the brilliant tailoring of Dior's designs with a greatly increased fluidity. In fact, the reception accorded the Trapeze, which was the name of Saint Laurent's first collection, was even more impassioned than that of the New Look pioneered by his predecessor. One Frenchwoman, tears in her eyes, exclaimed to her neighbor, "My dear, France is saved. It's Joan of Arc!" The New York *Herald Tribune* noted, "Everybody was crying. It was the emotional fashion binge of all time." To escape the crowds surging to embrace him, the "thin, thin, tall boy in a thin suit," as Diana Vreeland described the new designer, attempted to seek refuge on the tiny balcony. But there were more people gathered in the street below, cheering "Saint Lau-rent! Saint Lau-rent!"

The following day, headlines proclaimed "THE GREAT DIOR TRADITION WILL CONTINUE." However, the vast differences between Dior's vision and his heir's—Saint Laurent had been designated his successor upon Dior's death—

were revealed within a few seasons. Dior had designed for the older, "womanly" woman, believing that her "maximum fascination can continue indefinitely." He had looked on haute couture as a kind of shrine to a luxurious, privileged past. "Our civilization is a luxury and that is what we are defending," he had grandly declared. But none of Dior's aphorisms differentiated him as radically from Saint Laurent as the following one: "My dream is to save women from nature."

Saint Laurent's contribution to fashion was to reinstate women not only into nature but into the riotous, often anarchic reality of the nineteen-sixties. Dauphin Yves, as the French called him, soon began to revitalize the stale aura of haute couture through massive injections of youth culture. "Down with the Ritz; long live the street!" became one of his mottoes. He started taking huge gambles from his third year on, alienating a major part of his audience with his Beat Collection, which paid homage to the students of Paris's Left Bank in the form of skimpy skirts and gleaming motorcycle jackets. Soon afterward, Maison Dior's proprietor, M. Boussac, replaced Saint Laurent with Marc Bohan, who would remain the Maison's cautious designer into the late nineteen-eighties. Saint Laurent started looking for backers who would enable him to open his own house. That is where the saga of Christian Dior's personal legacy ended, and the Saint Laurent legend began.

It is interesting to note that Saint Laurent had his retrospective at the Metropolitan's Costume Institute in 1983, thirteen years before his mentor's. This order of preference, which is attributable to the Institute's former special consultant, Diana Vreeland, is considerably clarified by a biography scheduled for publication this January: "Yves Saint Laurent," by Alice Rawsthorn (Nan Talese/Doubleday, \$27.50).

Dior and his successor shared many similarities of background and of character. Like Dior, Saint Laurent was born into a prosperous family of the haute bourgeoisie: his father ran a thriving insurance business in Oran, Algeria, where the family's Alsatian forebears had settled after the Franco-Prussian War. Both men were aware of their homosexuality early on and were obsessively devoted to

their elegant mothers; both were of bookish, intellectual bent and were deeply versed in the arts; both were painfully shy. Both designers showed a precocious gift for fashion drawing, Saint Laurent taking third prize in a design competition at the age of seventeen. And both were highly superstitious: the hypersensitive, high-strung Saint Laurent is terrified of birds; when showing a new collection, he sometimes fingers a talisman—worry beads, a toy Bugs Bunny—to allay his anxiety.

Unlike Dior, however, Saint Laurent was lucky in love. The very week he scored his first triumph at Dior, he met Pierre Bergé, the brilliant businessman-littérateur who would eventually build their enterprise into an international fashion conglomerate far larger than Dior's. Throughout the years Bergé would also attempt to protect Saint Laurent's fragile health: Saint Laurent suffered severe physical and psychological shocks in 1960 when he was drafted into the Army. Brutally hazed in the barracks, he had a breakdown a few weeks after conscription. His biographer describes in frightening detail the primitive medical treatment he received; shock therapy and apparently enormous doses of sedatives left him weighing eighty pounds and barely able to speak. It took all of Bergé's ingenuity and devotion to arrange for Saint Laurent's discharge, to restore him to health, and to find backers to finance an independent couture house in which his protégé could fulfill his gifts.

When Maison Yves Saint Laurent's first collection was shown, in January of 1962, it received as much attention as Dior's first performance, or Saint Laurent's own first collection for Dior, in 1958. The human tide that rushed to greet the designer was so clamorous that, lacking a balcony, he tried to hide in a cupboard. And, from that year on, the shy, beautiful young man would be plagued, particularly in his own country, by the mixed blessings of mass adulation—by the celebrity status accorded only to great athletes, movie stars, rock singers, and other show-business idols who have reintroduced a hierarchy into the heart of contemporary egalitarianism. "At twenty-one I entered a kind of stronghold of glory," he has written, "which has been the trap of my life."

The pressures imposed on Saint Lau-

rent by Dior's legacy—the constant struggle to create novelty—were doubled by his own prophetic sense that custom-designed "high fashion" might be a dying institution: in 1966, he made the controversial move of starting a ready-to-wear line. It would soon be retailed in scores of countries under the name Rive Gauche. From the mid-sixties on, Saint Laurent, fully as work-driven and as much of a perfectionist as Dior, had to design four women's collections a year—two in January and July, for his salon, and two more in April and October, for his ready-to-wear. He faced other sources of anxiety as well: the restlessness and volatility of his own talent and the inevitable capriciousness with which the public received the dizzying diversity of his styles.

Dior's ultra-safe, bon-ton clothes had been received with steady enthusiasm; Saint Laurent, like Schiaparelli, whom he repeatedly cited as one of his favorite designers (another was Chanel), always seemed eager to experiment—to disturb and stretch or break the frontiers of design. Beyond some lasting innovations of the nineteen-sixties—his pants suits, his safari jackets, and the "smoking" or black menswear evening suit he pioneered—he played with startling combinations, such as bomber jackets worn over chiffon evening dresses, workmen's smocks executed in satins and velvets. The greatest colorist of twentieth-century couture, he experimented with raw, unexpected pairings of colors like yellow and fuchsia. His sources of inspiration were exotic, audaciously ironic, and often too manifold for comfort. In the space of two decades, he would pirate the canvases of Matisse, of Picasso, of Mondrian, and of his close friend Andy Warhol; pay tribute to the students' rebellion of 1968; design ball gowns inspired by "le Shakespeare look"; emulate the folk costumes of China, Peru, Morocco, and central Africa, or the court life of Casanova's Venice and nineteenth-century Russia; and parade "toga" ball gowns, which left one breast entirely bared. Saint Laurent's radical eclecticism has forever changed the face of fashion, enabling women to feel equally comfortable in "minis" and "midis," in nineteen-forties-retro jackets or embroidered shirts of Mongolian shepherds. Yet his very diversity led to alternations of euphoric public acclaim and blistering criticism, and incited a disgruntled journalist

to complain that one of Saint Laurent's shows resembled "downmarket travel brochures."

Such erratic receptions could have depressed a far more stable artist than Saint Laurent. They led him to the brink of disaster. Having never fully recovered from his Army breakdown, he has fought his depressions and suicidal impulses through a spiralling cycle of alcohol and drugs. Reading Ms. Rawsthorn's sensitive but properly stern account of Saint Laurent's dependencies, one cannot but wonder whether his health might have remained steadier if he had chosen different friends: for some decades, one of the earmarks of the Saint Laurent legend was the phalanx of high-living, spacey groupies who constantly surrounded him (hippies *de luxe*, the French called them). Of this desolate group, who particularly enjoyed doing drugs together in Marrakesh, where Saint Laurent and Bergé have a posh vacation retreat, Talitha Getty, the wife of John Paul Getty, Jr., died of a heroin overdose; the fabulously stylish Loulou de La Falaise was ordered by her doctor to stop drinking to prevent further damage to her health; and the gaunt, androgynous Betty Catroux, who, along with Loulou de La Falaise, is an acknowledged muse for Saint Laurent's creations, has been quoted as admitting to drug problems.

So it's not surprising that Saint Laurent's physical deterioration has often appalled his admirers. At his rare public appearances during the past two decades, the once ethereal young man sometimes walked unsteadily and was unable to answer questions coherently because of his slurred speech. Yet in France his ill health only added to his allure, which thrived on a national image of the couturier as a "creative artist" and on the Romantic legend of the delicate, doomed aesthete (Rimbaud, Verlaine) who must suffer for the sake of his art. In an interview with *Le Figaro* headlined "I WAS BORN WITH A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN," Saint Laurent discussed his homosexuality and his drug and alcohol abuse with an astonishing candor, thereby making himself all the more beloved.

IN the mid-nineteen-seventies, Saint Laurent began to take periodic detox cures in Paris's American Hospital. His opulently theatrical collection of July of 1976, inspired by Bakst's costumes for

ONSTAGE

PLAYING WITH STYLE

IN more than a century of symphony-orchestra concerts the format of the programs has stayed much the same, but the look of the orchestra has slowly changed. The solid rows of white piqué ties and black tails are now dotted with black holes where the women players sit, wearing all black and hoping to blend in.

Since an orchestra derives its power from its unity under the baton of a conductor, the question is whether the loss of visual unity detracts from the aesthetic whole. The Philharmonic recently held a wardrobe meeting, at which the women discussed appropriate dress (long sleeves, long skirts, and no glittering jewelry).



What should women in the orchestra wear? Suggestions from Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Ralph Lauren, and Isaac Mizrahi.

We may be happy to see more women in the orchestra (a third of the New York Philharmonic is now women), but their lack of a uniform as crisp and consistent as the men's tails makes them look like outsiders: last-minute guests not properly dressed for the occasion. Nancy Mehta, whose husband, Zubin, was the music director of the Philharmonic from 1978 to 1991, predicts that by the next century the majority of orchestra members will be women. What they will look like en masse has never been more relevant.

Orchestras got their look not long before Degas began his paintings of the fashionable Opéra Orchestra of Paris, in the eighteen-sixties. The black-and-white of Degas's musicians is a striking foil for the richly grained wood and gleaming metal of the instruments. When women joined orchestras, they looked for an equivalent of "Saturday-night formal"—black silk blouses, beaded jackets, flowing black skirts.

Many women players prize individuality of dress and feel that conformity would represent a kind of defeat. Cynthia Phelps, the Philharmonic's principal violist, loves to shop, and keeps a variety of outfits on hand for four concerts a week. Phelps's stand partner, Rebecca Young, is tempted by the convenience of regimented dress. "After all," she says, "the audience comes to hear music without the distractions of a fashion show."

Nancy Mehta has given the subject a lot of thought. "If men can accept a uniform in lieu of a variety of dress suits, why shouldn't women?" she says. A uniform of their own—not necessarily based on male tailoring but incorporating black and white and also a variety of cuts, for a range of movement related to the demands of different instruments—would give women the look they deserve as full-fledged members of the music community.

—PAULA DEITZ

FRANÇOIS BERTHOUD

Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, was almost entirely designed while he was in the hospital, and was hailed by some as the most important couture showing since Dior's 1947 New Look. In the following years, Saint Laurent began a new phase of severe isolation. In the company of none but his servants and his bulldog, Moujik, he shut himself off for weeks in one of his homes—the château in Normandy, the mansion in Marrakesh, the Paris complex in which he and Bergé now had separate quarters. (Bergé would eventually move out.) Often refusing to see anyone or to answer calls from even his closest friends, he did little except reread Proust, identifying himself with Proust's "magnificent and pitiful family of the hyper-sensitive." In the nineteen-eighties, as younger couturiers—Montana, Mugler, and Lacroix in particular—received tearful ovations such as had traditionally been reserved for Saint Laurent's triumphs, his designs became increasingly classical and safe. He seemed to be defying the generation of journalists who had been trained, in the Dior tradition, to promote the fashion of novelty. In an ironic break with his late mentor, he returned to the prewar pace of slow, patient stylistic evolution practiced by two of his other idols, Chanel and Balenciaga. He denounced "*la mode qui se démode*"—fashion that goes out of fashion. "Isn't elegance to forget what one is wearing?" and "The greatest art, Prince Metternich said, is to last" became two of his mottoes.

By 1986, at the age of barely fifty, Saint Laurent had become the tragic Grand Old Man of French couture. A lavish book on his work, published in France that year, was graced with a preface by the noted philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, who praised his "sumptuous impertinence," and an epigraph by the President of the Republic, François Mitterrand, who called him "*l'un des ambassadeurs du génie Français*." (The notion of George Bush writing a similar tribute to Scaasi is delectable.) Lacroix himself generously singled out Saint Laurent as the greatest couturier of the past half century, citing the versatility with which he had combined "the form of Chanel with the opulence of Dior and the wit of Schiaparelli." The former boy wonder received the Legion of Honor, and his retrospective at the Metropolitan—"Yves

Saint Laurent: 25 Years of Design"—was the first ever given at that museum to a living designer.

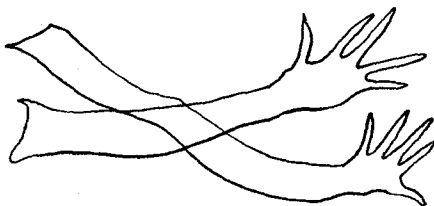
"You don't dismiss Notre-Dame Cathedral—even if monuments bore you to tears," a member of the foreign press wryly observed about the former enfant terrible. And yet Saint Laurent's decision to rebel against the cult of innovation seems to have been extremely propitious. Three weeks ago, in reports on this autumn's Paris fashions, the New York Times—after censuring Rei Kawakubo's unwearable eccentricities, and Gianfranco Ferré's tepid farewell collection for Maison Dior—had this to say: "While . . . audiences look to the runway for what is new, at Saint Laurent they can look quietly at what will last."

RAWSTHORN is a seasoned reporter for the *Financial Times*, of London, and excels equally at writing on economic issues and at writing fashion history. A good third of her often riveting book is devoted to a detailed analysis of Groupe Yves Saint Laurent's intricate financial operations, which have the reputation of being as opaque as the workings of the Vatican. For three and a half decades, they have been orchestrated by Saint Laurent's quixotic éminence grise, Bergé (toward whom the author is, in my opinion, unduly harsh: Bergé-bashing has become tiresomely fashionable, but even Rawsthorn's biography makes one wonder how Saint Laurent could ever survive two years without his friend). Even though the number of clients for custom-made couture clothes has plummeted to a mere three thousand worldwide, the multi-billion-dollar Saint Laurent industry, which, like its peers, reaps the majority of its business from perfume and cosmetics, continues to do well. So this book can be recommended equally to those interested in haute finance and to those interested in haute couture. But I remain far more haunted by the issues raised by the biographer's image of the designer's abiding fragility: ultimately, her book is yet another epic

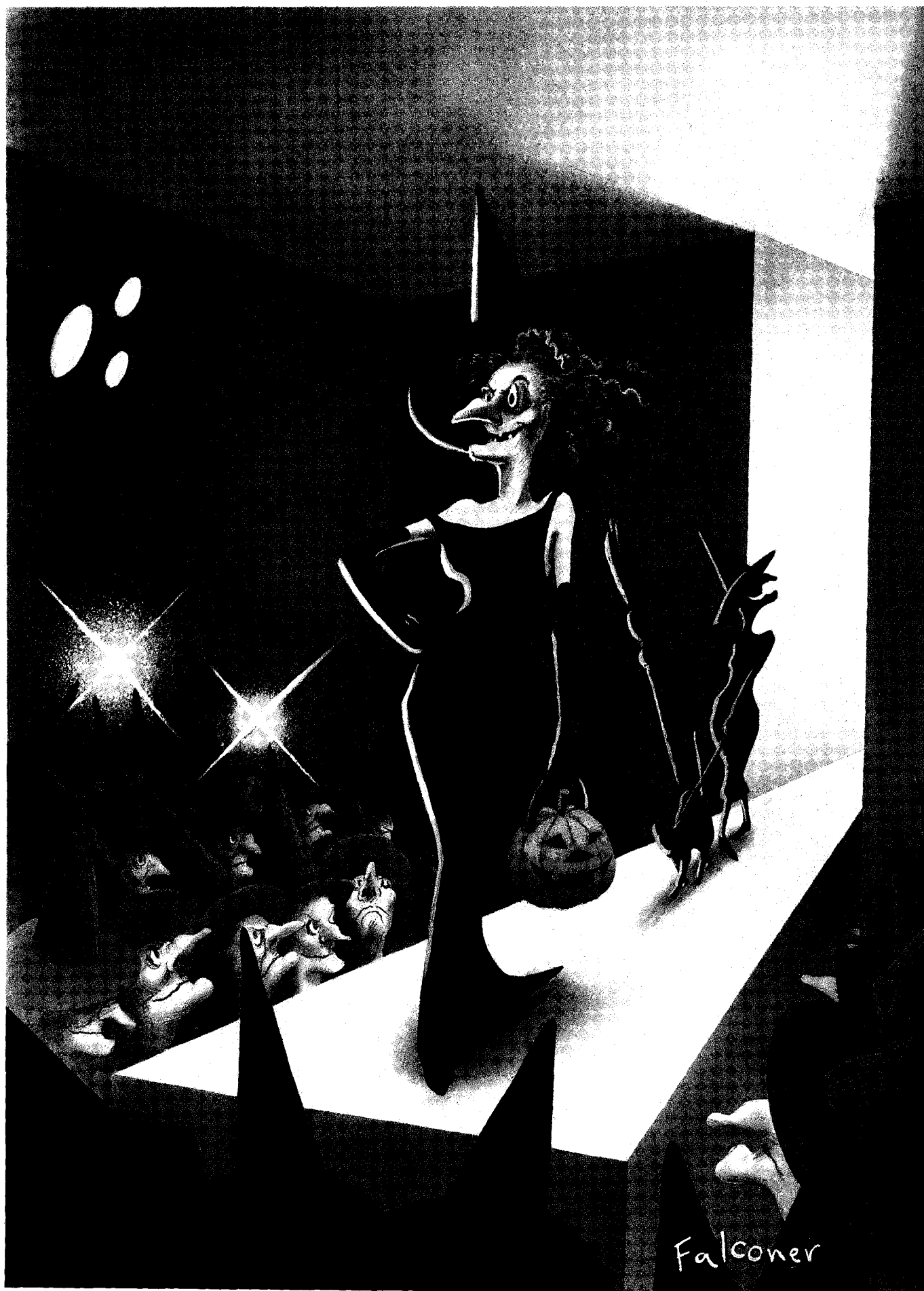
of "public triumph and private tragedy," yet another inquiry into the impact of media expectations on the gifted and the vulnerable.

Successful biographies of masters like Dior and Saint Laurent are also bound to raise questions that bear on their specific vocation: to what extent will the art of fashion design survive into the twenty-first century? In a recent issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, several authorities on style were asked to predict the kinds of garments that would be worn in the year 2096. Many of those questioned foresaw doom for the design industry as we've known it. Fashion, they believe, will be replaced by waterproof, sun-proof body paint; or by palm-size T-shirts that can be stretched to any desired shape, from baby size to parent size, and will feature microchips that will make them self-cleaning.

To all this I can best answer in current French parlance, "*C'est du bullshit*." Homo sapiens is also Homo frivolus. Our impulse to please ourselves, and others, by self-adornment is as natural as a peacock displaying its plumage, as instinctual as our need for sleep, for food, and for love. And even if we can never afford to filter fashion designers' visions into our own lives—even if their rarefied creations become a form of spectator industry, like ballet—their vocation will probably be as enduring as the vocations of doctors, engineers, and chefs. For the art of costume incarnates our need for the ecstasy of newness, for the mirage of otherness. A designer's inventions can express nostalgia for the splendor of one particularly idyllic past, as Dior's did. Or they can recycle a myriad cultures into magnificent fantasies of sculptured cloth, as Saint Laurent has done. And anyone who has observed the stylistic splendor of the Masai or of traditional Native American attire knows that the quest for elegance—which is ultimately an art of suppression, fittingness, self-knowledge, and cultivated nonchalance—does not necessarily have to do with money. I think that this is what Saint Laurent meant when he wrote the following: "Luxury is above all an attitude of the heart. . . . It's mostly a respect for others that makes [people] luxurious in their gestures, in their attitudes." Take that for what it's worth, from our most prodigal artist of the ephemeral. ♦



CATWALK COVEN

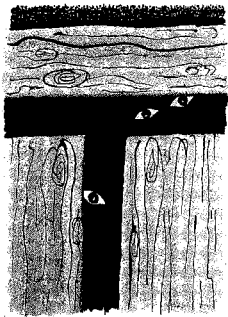


FICTION

UP LATE

Waiting for father to come home.

BY MARY GRIMM



THE candle is going out, Jean said. Put your hand around it, please. Jean was always very polite. I always loved it how polite she was. I had known her for a long time. How long? Two years and three months. Maybe that doesn't seem long. We were fourteen.

We lay very close together under the porch. This was the kind of porch that has a lot of space underneath, with crosswise slats on the sides or some kind of thing that lets light in. You find wood under porches sometimes, or chunks of concrete or old furniture. Rolls of snow fence. Clay flowerpots stacked up or knocked over so that all or some of them are broken. Under this porch it was empty, just dirt and cold leaves that had blown in.

It was nothing for us to be lying close together. We had had sex already, and even slept together in a bed, Jean's bed, for almost one whole night. There, under the porch, we lay together for warmth, and for the excitement. We could feel the excitement running from my body to hers and back again, little shivers of our shoulders and backs and legs.

We should've brought the flashlight, I said. But, no, Jean said, the candle is nicer. The flame was shaped like a teardrop, fiery and orange, with blue at the bottom. The blue was almost invisible because it was so dark. It was dark under the porch, and also because it was night, after one o'clock in the morning. We were waiting for Jean's father to come.

I wish we had a radio, Jean said. She was always wishing for things. I wish we had a Kit Kat, she said, or even some Now & Laters. I had some Smarties in my pocket and I rolled over to get them and then I fed them to her one by one with my fingers. Her mouth and her tongue were

warm. If we had a radio, somebody would be able to hear it, I said. Not if we had a Walkman, she said back. Then we lay quiet for a while, listening to the wind scuffling around in the dead leaves. I wondered how long those leaves had been under there. I thought it might be practice for being dead, lying there in the dark with the dirt and the dead leaves. I didn't say this to Jean, she doesn't like that kind of stuff. She would say to stop being creepy.

I had never met Jean's father, even though I had known her so long. He didn't live at home anymore. I knew her mother, who drank. She was foreign, she didn't speak English very well. She had an accent—not one of the kind that are supposed to be sexy but one of the thick kind. For a long time when I first knew Jean, she never invited me over to her house. I wasn't upset about this. We saw each other at school, and after school, and when we skipped school. Jean came over to my house sometimes but not usually. And then, finally, I went over there because Jean had my baseball cap, an old Indians one. It wasn't so much that I needed it, but I wanted it. I could have waited and asked her to bring it to school, but I wanted to get it from her. I wanted to get it from her hand. I wanted maybe to stand in her room and watch her take it out from wherever it was, her dresser drawer or under her bed. This was before we had sex, but not too long before.

So I went over there and Jean's mother opened the door. She looked different, not like my mother. She wore her hair in a bun, like old women do, and her dress looked different. She was drinking something out of a glass that she had on the kitchen table. Who are you, she said. I'm Matt, I said. She sat down at the table and stared at me, not saying anything else. The stuff in the glass was whiskey. I could tell, even though I had never tasted whiskey then. Jean has my baseball cap, I said. She looked at me and didn't answer. I started to wonder if I was in the right

house. Maybe she didn't even know Jean. Maybe it was like some book I had read and Jean had been space-warped away from her house and every trace of her existence wiped out. No one even remembered her name, except me. Jean, Jean, I thought, remembering, and then she came into the room. She had wanted to get a glass of milk, she said to me later, and didn't even know I was there. I thought she might be mad at me, especially since her mother was acting so weird. I thought how she'd never invited me to her house and here I was butting in. I didn't even know then that her mother drank.

Her mother is used to me now, though. When I come over she doesn't even notice most of the time. Sometimes she makes us something to eat or else we make our own. Sometimes she talks to me about where she came from. She will be talking in her bad English, waving her hands, and then she'll be talking her old language. She doesn't even notice the difference. If Jean and I aren't doing something I sit there and listen for a while. She's O.K., Jean's mother. Her father is another story, according to Jean.

WHAT if he doesn't come, I said. We'll come back some other time, Jean said. What if he never comes, I said. He'll come, she said. I know him. I don't know what you think we're doing here, I said. But in a way I did. The Smarties had made me hungry and I rolled around trying to see if there was anything left in my pockets. There hadn't been anything for dinner at Jean's house because her mother was passed out upstairs. There were some cold cabbage things stuffed with rice but they looked gross so we didn't have any. There would have been food at my house, but I was supposed to be sleeping over at Josh's house and so I couldn't go home. We had gone to McDonald's but we only had enough money for a small fries. In the inside

pocket of my jacket I found a cough drop. We took turns sucking on it. I remember my mother giving me cough drops, I told Jean. When I had a sore throat she used to come in the night and give me a cough drop. She'd sit by me until it was all gone so I didn't choke. My mother doesn't even know what a cough drop is, Jean said. The cough drop got thin, as thin as paper, and we passed it back and forth between our mouths like kissing.

We had actually had sex only one time. I wasn't so sure I wanted to, but Jean said we should. It wasn't that I didn't want to, but I wasn't sure if I knew how. I knew all about getting excited and getting hard, but then what? I knew it was supposed to go someplace, I was supposed to put it someplace, but did you do it with your hand or was there some other way? Also I was afraid for Jean to look at me. But it turned out we did it in the dark. That had been two weeks ago. Both of us said we wanted to do it again, but we hadn't yet. Now, under the porch, would have been a good time if it wasn't that we were waiting for her father to come. When the cough drop was gone we kissed some more, moving around on the ground in the dead leaves trying to get comfortable. I wanted Jean to take off her blouse but she wouldn't. I began to get mad. What the hell are we doing here anyway, I said.

Jean was blowing little puffs of breath at the candle to make the flame wiggle. You know why, she said. What if he doesn't come, I said. He comes here every night, she said. Almost every night. He stays here. I knew all this. Her father was going with the woman who lived in the house, this house with the porch. He had left Jean's mother, who was now drinking. Although her father was foreign, he wanted an American woman, someone who spoke good English and dressed in a sexy way. He spoke English very well, according to Jean. You could hardly tell he wasn't born here. Sometimes I thought that Jean had an accent, just a little. I liked it, but she hated it when I said anything about it. I even liked the way her mother talked, except when she was so drunk that she started to yell. Yelling in a foreign language is worse than in English.

What are you going to do if he comes, I said. *When* he comes, Jean said. You don't have to do anything, she said.

Did you tell Karyn we had sex, I said. Karyn was her best friend, except for

CHIC SIMPLE

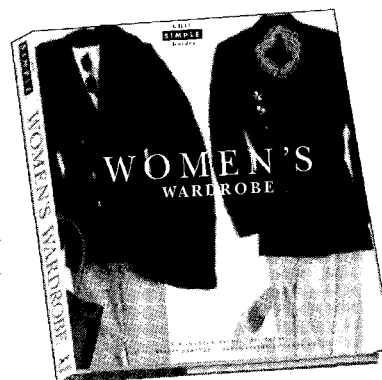
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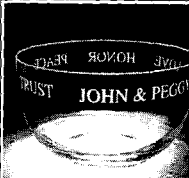
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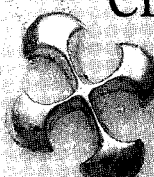
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A DOLL'S
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me. No, I didn't, Jean said. Why not, I said. Jean said Karyn wouldn't understand. Understand what, I said. She just wouldn't understand, Jean said, so there was no point. I lay there in the dead leaves thinking that Jean meant that Karyn would be grossed out if she knew we'd had sex. Karyn was in the Mission Club at school. I guessed there wouldn't be any point, but still I thought that Jean might have told her.

Tell me a story, Jean said. She said this a lot. Usually I could think of something. I would tell her like about when we went on vacation to Cincinnati and Dayton, where my folks had relatives. I would tell her things I used to do when I was little, like trying to make a train in the basement with folding chairs. But now, under the porch, I couldn't think of anything. Come on, Jean said, tell me something. She wiggled closer to me and put her tongue in my mouth and moved it all around, over my teeth and under my tongue where it's soft, and as far back as she could get it, back in my throat. Come on, she said, with her tongue in and out of my mouth. Tell me.

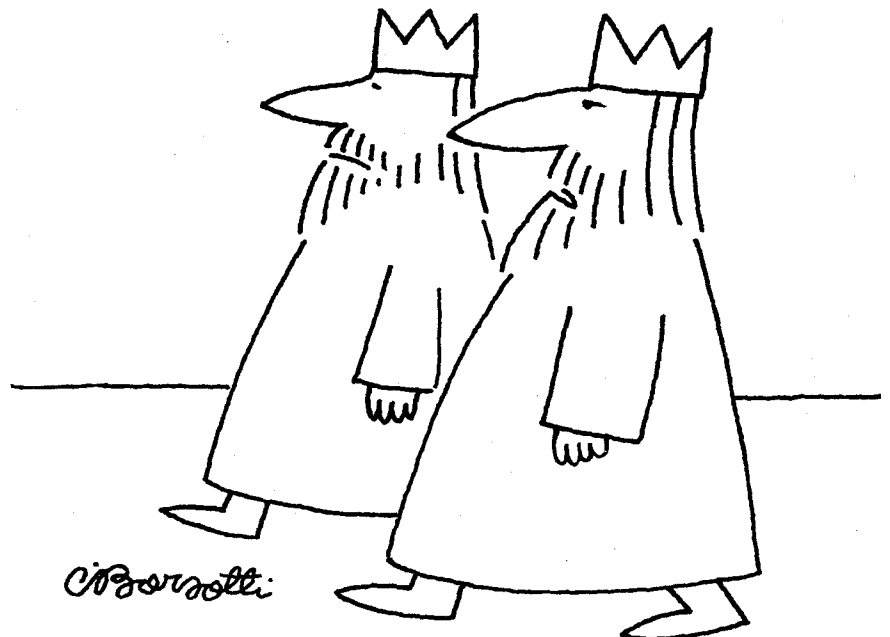
I tried to kiss her some more but she wouldn't. O.K., I said. I lay on my back with my arms behind my head. Looking up I could see the bottom of the porch, the little slits between the boards where light came through, the light from the street light. O.K., once there were these two kids named Jean and Matt, I said. Not about Jean and Matt, Jean said. At least give them different names. O.K., I said, it's Melinda and Jack. Jack is a name I would like for my own. Not Melinda,

said Jean. O.K., Natalie and Jack. Yes, Jean said. She lay on her back beside me. She took my hand and put it on her stomach.

There were Natalie and Jack, I said. They went to school but they were so smart they didn't need to do homework. Their teachers let them take all the time off they wanted to, as long as they took the test at the end. They would only come to school to hang out with their friends, but only if they felt like it. Natalie was very beautiful, very, very beautiful.

I stopped to think what to say about Natalie. What did girls want to be said about them? Natalie was very beautiful, I said again. She and Jack wanted to be rich and famous when they grew up. They thought they would be surgeons. Not surgeons, Jean said. Too bloody. O.K., I said, they wanted to be rock stars. Natalie was going to be the singer and Jack would play the bass guitar. They were going to move to California and live in a house in Malibu or someplace.

I don't know, Jean said. This is too much like "90210." All right, fine, I said. Tell your own if you don't like it. But right then her father came. At first we didn't know it was him. But there was a car and then a car door slamming. Someone was walking up the steps. Sh-h-h, Jean said. We were half kneeling, on our hands and knees in the dead leaves. We could hear voices. It was Jean's father and he was talking to someone. I could recognize his voice from when he talked to Jean on the phone. She would hold the phone to my ear when he was talk-



"I've never been a people pleaser."

ing a lot. It was a loud voice now, lower than my father's. His accent was like Jean's mother's but not as much.

"Don't be a child," he said to someone who answered right back, a woman. "I will if I want to," she said in a regular voice, American I mean.

It's her, Jean said. I knew she meant the woman he was going with. I nodded even though Jean couldn't see me. I put my mouth up against her ear and said what are we going to do. She didn't answer.

I could hear their feet on the floorboards. They were almost over our heads. They were moving a little but not walking, more as if they were rocking back and forth. They weren't saying anything. Then the woman laughed. She laughed and then stopped as if someone had put something in her mouth. They were kissing, I thought. He had put his tongue in her mouth.

I wished I was somewhere else. Jean's father was talking again in a low voice but I couldn't understand what he was saying. The woman didn't answer, but she sighed. I looked at Jean. I could see a slice of her face in the light that came through the floorboards. She was looking up as if she could see through the porch floor. Her lips were moving. Come on, she said. I got up. I thought she meant it was time to go, to go out and talk to her father. But she started to unzip my pants and pull them down.

Jean, I said to her, whispering. But she was pulling our shirts up and sliding the skin of her tits against my chest. The candle fell over and went out. Jean moved her lips up my neck to my mouth so I opened it and kissed her. Don't make a noise, she said in my ear when I started to groan. But the leaves were breaking and crackling under us.

"What's that noise?" the woman said, over our heads. "It's only a cat," Jean's father said in his rumbling voice.

Jean pulled away from me. I could feel a wet place on my leg. She was crawling away to the other end of the porch where we had got in. There was a broken place there, where I had scratched my arm. I could see the dark shape of her for a minute, and then she was out. Now she's going to do it, I thought. She's going to talk to her father. I knew I should go with her. But I felt funny, just like the other time we had sex, although we hadn't actually had sex this time, or not all the way. It was like when I had fallen on the

playground once and hit my head. My head and my body felt light, and I had to close my eyes and just rest for a minute.

Over my head there was a scuffling sound and a shout. "Who's there?" Jean's father yelled. There was a sound of glass breaking, and something heavy falling on the boards over my head. The woman screamed. I was pulling my pants up and trying to run out from under the porch. I hit my head getting through the broken place, and I fell out into the yard. I stood up to see where Jean was. She was running down the street, I could see her just going around the corner. The woman looked across the porch and saw me and screamed again. "I'll call the police!" she screamed at me. "Do you hear me? The police." I was afraid to look away from her. The ground was lumpy and hard. I could see that the storm door behind them was broken, and there was broken glass from it on the porch floor. The woman was standing in it, not screaming anymore, the glass in shiny triangles all around her feet. Jean's father was crouched over, still ducking, with his hands held up to his head. He started to look up and I ran.

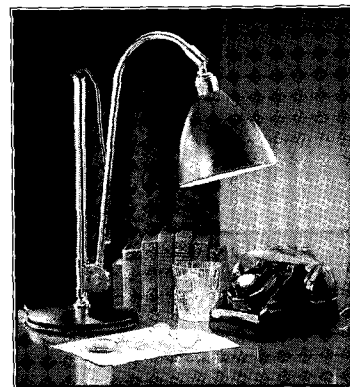
Running after Jean, I felt cold. It seemed too light outside, almost as bright as in the day. I could see Jean ahead running for the schoolyard. My breath was hurting my throat but I ran faster. It was the way you used to run when you were a kid, how you ran as fast as you could, just for the hell of it.

Jean was under the bleachers, kneeling on the gravel. I stood next to her. Why is it so light out here, I said. She had her head down, and she was bending over like she was going to be sick, but then I saw that she was laughing. What happened, I said. She shook her head. The ends of her hair touched the gravel, falling long over her face and shoulders. I could see her skin under her hair and it was very white. I put my hand on her back and I could feel her laughing up through her bones.

I threw a rock at him but I only broke the door, Jean said. He was scared, don't you think? I sat down and put my arm around her. What a baby, Jean said. Don't you think he's a baby?

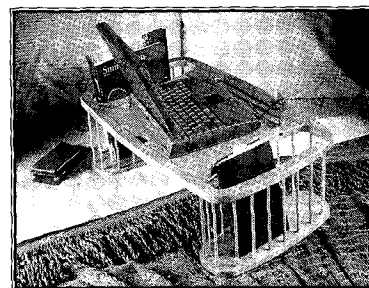
Why is it so light out here, I said. Jean laid her head against my arm. Silly, it's the moon, she said. The moon must be shining. She held her hand out into the white light so that it made a shadow on the gravel. It was nothing, that little move, but it was just like her. I had known her for such a long time. ♦

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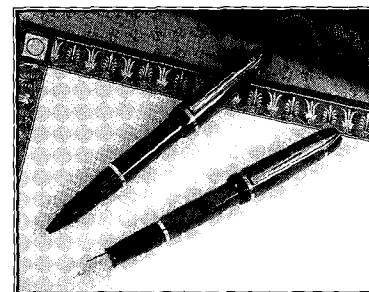
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BOOKS

AMERICAN X-RAYS

Forty years of Allen Ginsberg's poetry.

BY HELEN VENDLER

IN a poem to Allen Ginsberg, Czesław Miłosz wrote:

I envy your courage of absolute defiance,
words inflamed, the fierce
maledictions of a prophet. . . .
Your blasphemous howl still resounds
in a neon desert where the human tribe
wanders, sentenced to unreality. . . .
And your journalistic clichés, your
beard and beads and your dress of a
rebel of another epoch are forgiven.

Allen Ginsberg, at the beginning of his "Selected Poems 1947-1995" (Harper-Collins; \$28), gives his own definition of his "absolute defiance": "I imagined a force field of language counter to the hypnotic force-field control apparatus of media Government secret police & military with their Dollar billions of inertia, disinformation, brainwash, mass hallucination."

Ginsberg's "force field" came to public notice with the publication of "Howl and Other Poems," in 1956, when Ginsberg was thirty years old. The title poem of the volume cried out against an America that devoured its young as the pagan god Moloch had devoured the children sacrificed to him. Ginsberg had seen his mother, Naomi—an immigrant from Russia—decline into persecution mania and eventual institutionalization; and he himself, after an apparently successful transition from Paterson, New Jersey, to Columbia University, fell in with the petty criminality of friends, was briefly hospitalized in lieu of serving a prison sentence, and eventually left New York for San Francisco. Like his father, Louis, who was a high-school English teacher, Ginsberg wrote verse; but, while Louis's poetry was conventional and high-minded, his son's was tormented and ecstatic. In San Francisco, Ginsberg and others (Kenneth Rexroth, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Robert Duncan) emerged as the Beat movement, which in its frankness and its commitment to social and erotic reform provoked a storm in

the world of writing. United States customs impounded as obscene copies of "Howl" printed in England, and the San Francisco police sent two officers to the City Lights bookshop, where the first edition was for sale, and arrested the publisher, the poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. At the subsequent trial, the judge pronounced "Howl" not obscene, and declared Ferlinghetti not guilty; the attendant publicity made both "Howl" and Ginsberg famous.

"Howl" was followed by other remarkable books, of which the most notable was "Kaddish and Other Poems," in which the title poem, a long elegy for Ginsberg's mother, widened the sympathies of the American lyric by incorporating into it the vernacular anguish of the Jewish immigrant experience. Ginsberg later, with some grandeur, called two of his volumes "Planet News" and "The Fall of America." William Carlos Williams had written, "It is difficult to get the news from poems," but Ginsberg put the news of the day into poetry in a bold and irreverent way. The F.B.I., the C.I.A., the Vietnam War, gay life, urban decay—all appeared regularly in Ginsberg's bulletins. Yet Ginsberg's remarkable poetic powers have been less extensively commented on than his many charities, his indefatigable political investigations, his support of other writers, his thronged readings (accompanied by finger cymbals, harmonium, chants), his world travel, his theatrical protests, his moral injunctions (against the hydrogen bomb, against political lies, against eco-destruction). These actions make him a significant cultural figure, but it is the poetry that makes him a significant literary figure.

Against the high odds of fame, over-occupation, and aging, Ginsberg has continued to write poetry; and every one of his books has had its memorable pieces. But that success has also been perennially threatened, and at times undone, by his two opposing neurotic temptations, which

are paranoia and emotional withdrawal, and by his two poetic temptations, which are populism and "spontaneity." In his best poems, the ever-flickering paranoia is tempered by self-irony, humor, wisdom, or sheer curiosity about being; and the Buddhist quietism that would turn every phenomenon into illusion is revoked, just in time, by an eddy of feeling. If Ginsberg's populism craves a platinum record, it is checked by a scruple of art; and the spontaneity that records bus voice-overs on his travels is corralled by a sense of shapelessness. (When the balance of powers fails, the poems become either rant or sermon, rock lyric or journal notes.) Taken all together, Ginsberg's poems are X-rays of a considerable part of American society during the last four decades.

GINSBERG'S dark sense of social evil must stem in part from his imaginative symbiosis with his paranoid mother, "from whose pained head," he says in "Kaddish," "I first took Vision." On the other hand, the America in which he came of age defined homosexual acts as crimes, pursued undeclared wars in Korea and Vietnam, ran puppet governments in South America and elsewhere, was undisguisedly racist, had unsavory dealings with the drug trade, and spied shamelessly on its citizens through the F.B.I. Ginsberg differed from his apolitical contemporaries not only in that his political education had begun early (through his mother) but in that his own marginality as a homosexual made resistance to the status quo necessary for self-respect. He differed from many activist poets in eventually coming to recognize that all bureaucracies are much the same: he was as unwelcome in Communist police states (Czechoslovakia and Cuba both threw him out) as he was in the United States. And he was aware (as most reformers are not) that the underlying cause of his zeal was aggression within himself, which was projected outward as suspected aggression in others. The rage and despair in Ginsberg's early poems were as much a product of self-loathing as of objective criticism of the world. Yet his own crises of feeling enabled his violent insights into the suffering inflicted by a repressive society on its young,

who were expelled from the academies
for crazy & publishing obscene odes
on the windows of the skull . . .
who got busted in their pubic beards
returning through Laredo with a
belt of marijuana for New York . . .
who howled on their knees in the



Ginsberg at a fifties recording session in Berkeley. At his best, he is alert, unprogrammed, free.



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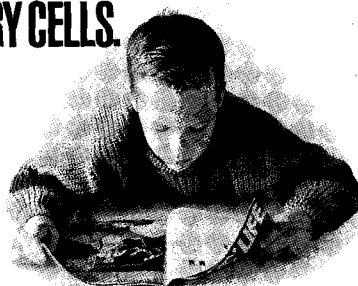
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subway and were dragged off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts.

Ginsberg was saved from suicidal depression by what he called an "auditory vision," in which he heard a voice—he took it to be that of William Blake—reciting poetry. Since Ginsberg's own poetry has always been scored for the audible voice—endorsing orality over the inhibitions of literacy—it is no surprise that the vision was an auditory one. And, since Blake is the greatest English poet of disinhibition—as Whitman is its greatest American poet—it was Blake who would be the instigator and Whitman the guru of Ginsberg's early verse. Whitman's "Unscrew the locks from the doors! / Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" was the epigraph for "Howl"; and—to complete the revolutionary triad of precursors—Shelley's "Die, / If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!" was the epigraph for "Kaddish."

Blake and Shelley and Whitman were, on the whole, better poetic models for Ginsberg's verse than Buddhist sutras. Ginsberg's path resembles that of T. S. Eliot: both possessed exceptionally high-strung sensibilities, which when exacerbated plunged them into states alarmingly close to madness; both had breakdowns; both sought some form of wisdom that could ameliorate, guide, or correct the excesses of their reactions; and what Eliot found in Dr. Vittoz's Lausanne sanatorium ("Give . . . Sympathize . . . Control," words from an Upanishad quoted in "The Waste Land") Ginsberg found in Buddhist mantras and meditative practice.

Ginsberg's Buddhism seems to me to have had roughly the same effect on his lyrics that Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism had on his: a tension goes out of the poetry, and didacticism replaces it. In taming the uncontrollable, in regulating the nerves, the flinching person is made able to live; one cannot dispute the wisdom, in life, of staying out of the asylum. Yet the analysis of unregulated and baffling pain is a deep source of powerful lyric expression. The discipline that is taken up to regulate such pain is, of course, in itself a source of a different kind of deep pain—the pain of self-mutilation. Though the Eliot of "Four Quartets" recognizes this, Ginsberg is not very much interested in it. He finds consolation, rather than pain, in the atheist emptiness of his Buddhism.

THE new "Selected" is not entirely satisfactory. Many wonderful poems—from "American Change" to "Chances R," from "Ecologue" to "Black Shroud"—have been omitted so that

some sixty pages of Ginsberg's songs (none of which appeared in the 1984 "Collected Poems") could be included. The songs may be convincing in performance, but they don't survive cold print, and Ginsberg's association with Bob Dylan is recalled rather too buoyantly: "I'm pleased with this intergenerational exchange of influence which confirms old traditions of artistic & spiritual transmission." Hardly an accurate interpretation: what of Ginsberg will enter the matrix of tradition is least likely to be the song lyrics imitating Dylan. But a truer statement follows: "The original task was to 'widen the area of consciousness,' make pragmatic examination of the texture of consciousness, even somewhat transform consciousness." That seems a fair summary of what Ginsberg's work has, in fact, done. Of course, his public appearances and his political activities have in their own way helped to "widen the area of consciousness," just as have Czeslaw Milosz's and Adrienne Rich's essays. But poetry has its own means, and they are not the same as marching in parades or writing persuasive prose.

Ginsberg's poetry gains much of its power from a cinematically detailed immersion in present-tense immediacy. You are there (as in any Ginsberg poem) when, in "Manhattan May Day Midnight," Ginsberg goes out at night to buy the newspapers and sees workmen tracking down a gas leak. He notices the bullet-shaped skull of the man in the manhole, he remarks the conjunction of asphalt and granite, he registers the presence of an idling truck:

At the Corner of 11th under dim
 Street-light in a hole in the ground
 a man wrapped in work-Cloth and
 wool Cap pulled down his bullet skull
 stood & bent with a rod & flashlight
 turning round in his pit halfway sunk
 in earth
 Peering down at his feet, up to his
 chest in the asphalt by a granite Curb . . .
 Yes the body stink of City bowels,
 rotting tubes six feet under
 Could explode any minute sparked by
 Con Ed's breathing Puttering truck
 I noticed parked.

What is agreeable here is that there's no agenda. We are not asked to sympathize with the proletariat or to feel ecologically alarmed by the gas leak. Ginsberg's invincible interest in the real liberates us into a participatory disinterestedness. And his mind roams widely, in unpredictable ways. In another poem, the gas scene might have led to Ginsberg's

own gas stove, or to comparable workers he had seen in India, or to the lure of night walking. In this case, his mind turns unexpectedly to Ancient Rome and Ur:

I passed by hurriedly Thinking Ancient Rome, Ur
Were they like this, the same shadowy
surveyors & passers-by
scribing records of decaying pipes &
Garbage piles on Marble, Cuneiform,
ordinary midnight citizen out on the
street looking for Empire News.

One can't widen consciousness in poetry by having it follow a programmed path (as most ideologically committed poetry does). However noble its intentions, a programmed path *narrows* consciousness. Ginsberg, at his best, is alert, unprogrammed, free.

TO examine "the texture of consciousness" means to find the million places existing in the interstices between our coarse terms for the activities of consciousness: "planning," "remembering," "memorizing," "grieving," "hoping." The texture of consciousness has had such marvellous explorers in our century (Joyce and Woolf in the novel, Eliot and Stevens in poetry) that it might seem that the task has already been accomplished. But Ginsberg has added something new. This has generally been thought to be the unspeakable (his mother's vomiting and defecating in the bathroom in "Kaddish," his own sexual grovelling in "Please Master," his embarrassment at the effects of Bell's palsy in "What You Up To?"). But, though Ginsberg has tracked shame and humiliation with great thoroughness, he has equally been the "Curator of funny emotions to the mob"—to borrow the title he bestowed on Frank O'Hara.

The comedy of consciousness was not the stock-in-trade of Eliot or Stevens, but it occurs with brio in Ginsberg, whose satiric eye is always ready to pick up a new contemporary genre—the "Personals" ad, for instance—and use it for a CAT scan of his own psyche:

Poet professor in autumn years
seeks helpmate companion protector
friend . . .
to share bed meditation apartment
Lower East Side,
help inspire mankind conquer world
anger & guilt,
empowered by Whitman Blake
Rimbaud Ma Rainey & Vivaldi . . .
Find me here in New York alone with
the Alone.

Which of us, Ginsberg's poem suggests, has not read the "Personals" ads and mentally composed one? Which of us has not recognized the intrinsic absurdity of self-

description? The very levels of consciousness that exist to be explored are mocked by their jockeying for place in Ginsberg's ad: the tabloid self-epithet, "poet professor"; the helpless stock of cliché, "autumn years"; the archaic reversion, "seeks"; the casting about for names for homosexual partnership, "helpmate companion protector friend." (The writer's mental state alters slightly with each of these: from the Biblical "helpmate" to the euphemistic "companion" and on to the feudal "protector" and the longed-for "friend.") The impossibility of enumerating all the levels of consciousness shows up in the forced coexistence on a single line of Rimbaud and Ma Rainey; and Ginsberg's self-silhouetting—the last line echoes Lionel Johnson, who wrote, grandly, "*Lonely, unto the Lone I go; / Divine, to the Divinity*"—shows his determination not to forsake the (parodic) sublime.

IN lyric poetry one transforms the consciousness of others solely by transforming one's own. Ginsberg's self-transformations (rather like Whitman's) license his readers to go and do likewise. "Sunflower Sutra" is one of the famous rhapsodic self-transformations ("You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!"), but there are also satiric ones, of which the most outrageously cheerful is the famous "Pull My Daisy":

Pull my daisy
tip my cup
all my doors are open
Cut my thoughts
for coconuts
all my eggs are broken.

It's hardly possible to say this without losing a lot of pompousness (if one happens to be harboring any). To become Ginsberg as one reads his poems is to undergo a powerful, if transient, alteration of consciousness. Under his spell, one is both more excited and more noticing, more tender and more mocking. As humor bests aggression, and curiosity bests xenophobia, the world improves.

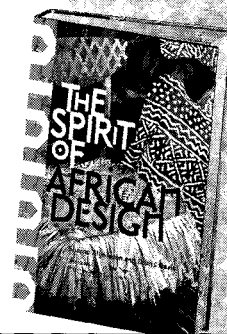
Finally, Ginsberg's ever reliable means of consciousness-raising is his rhythmic momentum, expressed by his long lines rolling in like breakers. Its urgency—at times strained, when Ginsberg is forcing the issue, but often genuine—means that some portion of life is demanding its place in the museum of history. If Ginsberg had not been mugged in New York, we would not have had the unstable rhythms of "Mugging":

I went down shouting Om Ah Hūm
to gangs of lovers on the stoop watching

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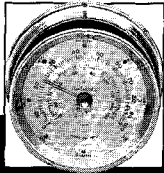


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slowly appreciating, why this is a raid, these strangers mean strange business with what—my pockets, bald head, broken-healed-bone leg, my softshoes, my heart—

Have they knives? Om Ah Hüm—

Have they sharp metal wood to shove in eye ear ass? Om Ah Hüm & slowly reclined on the pavement, struggling to keep my woolen bag of poetry address calendar & Leary-lawyer notes hung from my shoulder.

Ginsberg's nonresistant chanting drives the muggers crazy—"Shut up or we'll mur-

der you"—and the poet concludes that it's easier to transform your own consciousness than that of the man in the street. Yet, though the poem descends from its idealist hopes, and closes ruefully in the realm of the real, it does not dismiss the premise that non-violence as a response to violence is the only alternative to an endless chain of aggression. The new generation reading Ginsberg's "Selected" will find in such poems that Ginsberg's "force field of language" still exerts a powerful imaginative pressure. ♦

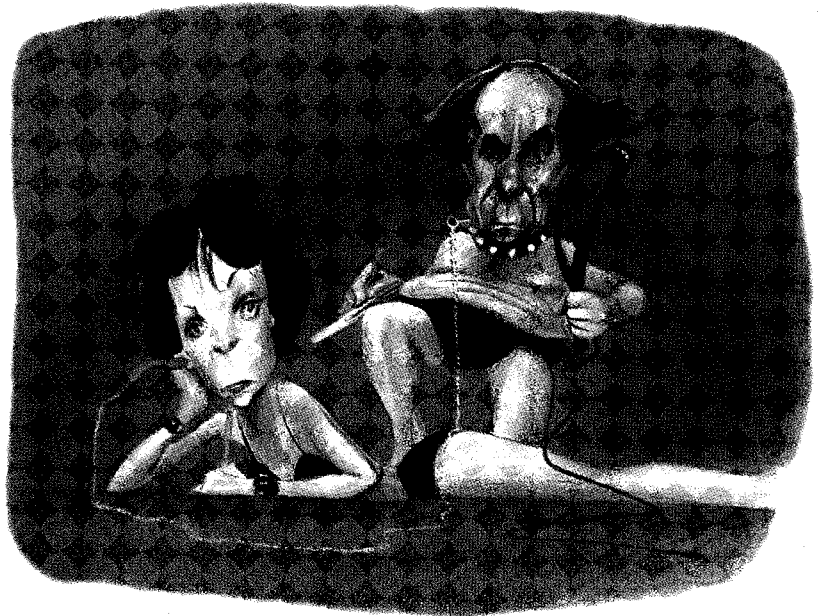
THE YEARS WITH ROTH

The Muse becomes Medea in Claire Bloom's new memoir.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

PHILIP ROTH'S sexually incorrect imagination has long been a scourge of the banner-bearing feminist, so it's hardly surprising that his ex-wife's new revenge memoir, "Leaving a Doll's House" (Little, Brown; \$23.95), is being

On the face of it, the relationship between Claire Bloom and Philip Roth had seemed almost picture-perfect. She was the actress whose melting, dark-eyed beauty caught the attention of Charlie Chaplin and led to her starring in "Lime-



Bloom wants to play the hapless victim of Roth's misogyny. She is badly miscast.

heralded as an inspirational text, a strategic sortie against patriarchal malevolence. It is, we have been assured, an especially apt form of comeuppance. Hasn't Roth used his most intimate relationships as fodder for his scabrous, cruelly funny novels? Isn't turnabout fair play? In short order, the delicate-featured memoirist has become a source of lurid fascination—a sort of upscale Lorena Bobbitt for the kaffeeklatsch set.

light" at the age of twenty; and he was the novelist of lanky build and brooding, Heathcliffian visage. There they were, living in disciplined but creative splendor in Connecticut and New York and London, and there they were again, in a television documentary made on the occasion of Roth's sixtieth birthday, celebrating with friends at an elegant restaurant, laughter and good feelings all around.

How little we knew! It turns out, as

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IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH BRODSKY

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This though your voice is hung in the heights of the ballroom,
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You don't have to love us now. And the leaves of books
Are flicking aloud on the lens of the first reader

To hear you from the future. I remember
That was the sound I heard, though you who made it

Were awkwardly joking then, like you were worried
We knew you were only passing, weren't local,

Were out to upset us somehow. That was that chuckle:
Something to do with oxygen, fair pain,

Oasis reached at last though knowing each sign
One could survive was not a sign for home.

—GLYN MAXWELL

she writes, that he thought "I behaved oddly in restaurants, looking at my watch and humming to myself," when he wasn't distracted by playing footsie under the table with other women, or sinking into deep depressions, or carping about money. It turns out that he was always something of a monster ("feral, unflinching, hostile, accusative") and that she was always intent on being long-suffering ("I [felt] as though there was a trial under way and I was the defendant"). But she continued to cling to him for the next eighteen years, because he was so damned brilliant and she was so damned vulnerable: "My fear of abandonment . . . has never left me." Then, one day in the summer of 1993, he threw her out of the "still, beautiful, and austere" clapboard house that she had shown no signs of leaving on her own, however bad things got. At which point the English Rose, as the British press once dubbed her, decided to show her thorns. If our image of this fine couple has been bloodied, at least the record has now been set straight. Or so "Leaving a Doll's House" would have us believe.

Some of what's wrong with the book can be blamed on the lackluster quality of the prose; it's easy to forget how much artistry is required to shape candor into something other than the yelps and shrieks of *Look at me! Watch me run, smile,*

get hurt, cry! But no one really expects these sorts of books to win prizes in the writing department. More troubling is the oddly secondhand, almost canned quality of the emotions Bloom records. After she ended an adulterous six-year affair with Richard Burton, she tells us, as if reading off cue cards, "I was left with a profound sense of loss, of panic, and humiliation." And here is her explanation of her passionless decision to marry Rod Steiger a year later, at age twenty-eight: "I was searching for the paternal masculine support of the kind I had been deprived of when I was a child." Even when she writes of abruptly leaving Steiger for Hillard Elkins, a flashy theatre producer with baroque tastes in everything from interior decoration to sex, Bloom eschews the hazards of self-reflection in favor of cultural theory à la Margaret Mead: "Women of my time and upbringing were offered very few opportunities for sexual exploration or expression. . . . Between the Judaic abjuration of sexual pleasure and the Victorian stricture against anything sexual whatsoever, my generation of Jewish women were thus doubly trapped."

At age forty-three, having lost her manager-husband Elkins to another woman, Claire Bloom finds herself at a personal and professional standstill. Enter Philip Roth, who bumps into her on

Madison Avenue as he is on his way to his shrink and she to her yoga teacher. Bloom has always been drawn to saturnine, "emotionally unavailable" men, and he does not disappoint. When he's not snarling at her or having nightmares that lead to "high-pitched cries . . . in the night," he is balking at her sensible plan to buy "a small, inexpensive holiday retreat" in Umbria. Roth even asks her to kick her eighteen-year-old-daughter, Anna, out of their London apartment, a request to which the ever-accommodating Bloom agrees.

But where, in any of this, is Bloom's own, highly formidable, will? It was, after all, that steady instrument which propelled her out of a financially uncertain and peripatetic childhood onto the London stage, and then gave her the resolve to dump one husband (Steiger proved too melancholy, especially around Christmas) and use the second, Elkins, for his connections, even as she shuddered at his arriviste ways. One can discern, through the pious gloss Bloom puts on the events of her life, the shrewd maneuverings of a stage brat. Many of her passing amours help her find work, and even the black-guard novelist is pressed into service: he helps her restructure her career around a successful series of one-woman performances and recitals—beginning with Shakespeare and moving on to interpretations of Henry James and Akhmatova. Undoubtedly, Roth's cultural authority was part of his allure, although to hear Claire Bloom tell it you'd think she married him out of some sort of abstract sense of literary appreciation—almost as though she were the flesh-and-blood embodiment of one of his own worshipful female creations. ("I could be his Muse, if only he'd let me," one such character says in the epigraph to Roth's "My Life as a Man.")

A friend of mine, after skimming the galleys of Bloom's book at my dinner table, impatiently demanded to know where the "bad" parts were. I understood how she felt: notwithstanding the narrator's breathlessly ominous tones, no one is actually slapped around in her book. Her marital torments are of a subtler order, often resembling the standard dissensions that occur in any long-standing relationship. The account of her years with Roth involves little physicality. More than that, it is curiously without erotic charge.

Equally absent is any sense of moral accountability. There is always something out there—marijuana, her Absent Father, and, handiest of all, her unconscious—

that forces her to do things that are less than exemplary. "The truth is that I was unable to oppose him," she writes, and it is upon this convenient fiction that her narrative is precariously perched. Bloom still sounds much like the "undeniably self-centered . . . willful and high-strung little girl" she recalls having been, playing "potted versions of Shakespeare plays": "My chosen heroines were rarely, if ever, heroic; instead, they were tormented by hateful stepparents, imprisoned by wicked witches." In her own eyes, she remains forever a passive being fatally attracted to men who issue demonic commands she has no choice but to obey.

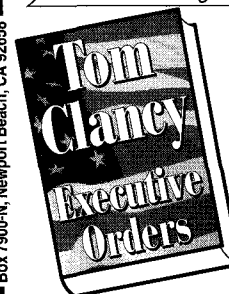
THE real problem with Bloom's book is that it asks readers to do more than feel sympathy and outrage on behalf of its put-upon heroine: beginning with the portentous title, it asks us to take her plight as paradigmatic of something larger than her own misbegotten amorous choices. She presents her book as a classic drama of captivity and release—tracking her emergence from swanky Connecticut bondage to the lonely freedom of her own apartment on the Upper East Side. Indeed, this glamorous and determined and resourceful woman—with her numerous lovers, her three husbands, and her career as an acclaimed stage and screen actress—wants to play another emotionally battered wife with a horrific tale to tell. She is badly miscast.

I suppose that for a female reader to reject Bloom's he-made-me-do-it perspective is to risk sounding unsisterly or simply hard-hearted. Truth to tell, it's not easy to say which of this pair comes off worse, the masochist or the narcissist. In many respects, though, they seem an uncannily perfect match. Each is talented, Jewish, good-looking, supremely manipulative, snobbish, tightfisted (there is much high dudgeon over Bulgari rings, stereo equipment, and dinner tabs); each ardently looks out for the other, until real life—with its dying mothers, ailing fathers, demanding daughters, and nervous breakdowns—intrudes, in its ungainly way.

"Leaving a Doll's House" is written in the blinding light of determined unknowingness by a woman who smiles sweetly as she scatters poisoned morsels. But if the book is less persuasive as a feminist fable than as a vehicle of vengeance, that's because Bloom is finally not interested in exploring the complex reciprocations and moral ambiguities of actual

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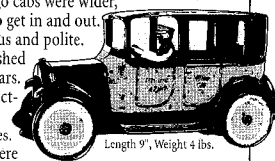
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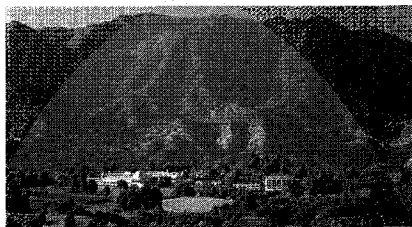
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human relationships. For all her demure flutterings, she is a scorpion posing as a trapped butterfly.

The one service Philip Roth's ex-wife has unwittingly rendered him is to remind us that a writer's voice—"something that begins at around the back of the knees," he once wrote—is everything; and that even so self-plundering a novelist as Roth

is not performing an act of mimesis, not simply slapping his interior existence onto the page. Despite nearly two decades in his company, Bloom has somehow failed to learn from his greatest strength, which is an intensity of scrutiny that spares himself least of all. If the unexamined life is not worth living, surely the unreflective memoir is not worth reading. ♦

POLITICAL PORN

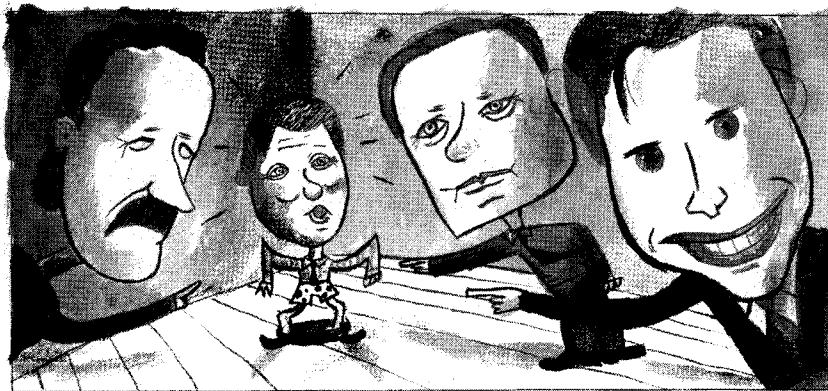
The real thrust of the latest Clinton chronicles.

BY DAVID REMNICK

THE pollsters are predicting a safe landing for Bill Clinton on November 5th. Yet they tell an accompanying story: though the American people are ready to equip Clinton with the nuclear button, they would not necessar-

clearly we realize how ego, ambition, power, and the sheer act of running for office disfigure them. They are very nearly insane, and we have learned to make allowances for them.

What distinguishes Clinton from his



Pointing fingers: Roger Morris, Gary Aldrich, and David Brock.

ily lend him a hundred dollars or the keys to the minivan. They do not see him as an entirely trustworthy figure. Let us not even speak of his wife.

By now, it seems, we have learned that persons shaped by years of fund-raising, baby-kissing, backslapping, and insincere smiling are not exactly normal. We understand that Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and even Reagan were all marked by colossal self-indulgence and raging egos; and yet it is the normal men like Ford, Carter, and Bush whom we cannot abide. They are too small, too ordinary, for the office they sought. The public seems to have reconciled itself to the idea that the men who run for President are as different from ordinary folk as giraffes are from kangaroos, and we, as voters, long to know all we can about the giraffes. But the more we learn about these creatures the more

predecessors is not the level of his strangeness—his hungers and his inconstancy—but, rather, the amount of information (some of it true) that has been published about him while he is still in office. For decades, journalists have been writing biographies of Presidents while they were active. Nevertheless, no President has been, well, as *exposed* as Clinton. It is almost impossible to comprehend what we know, or think we know, about him.

In a recent issue of *The New York Review of Books*, Joan Didion ended a long critique of Bob Woodward's post-Watergate books by calling them "political pornography." I have to disagree. Like certain Justices of the Supreme Court, I think I know pornography when I see it, and Woodward, whatever his omissions of analysis, is no pornographer. It is, I believe, impossible to transform the phone calls of White

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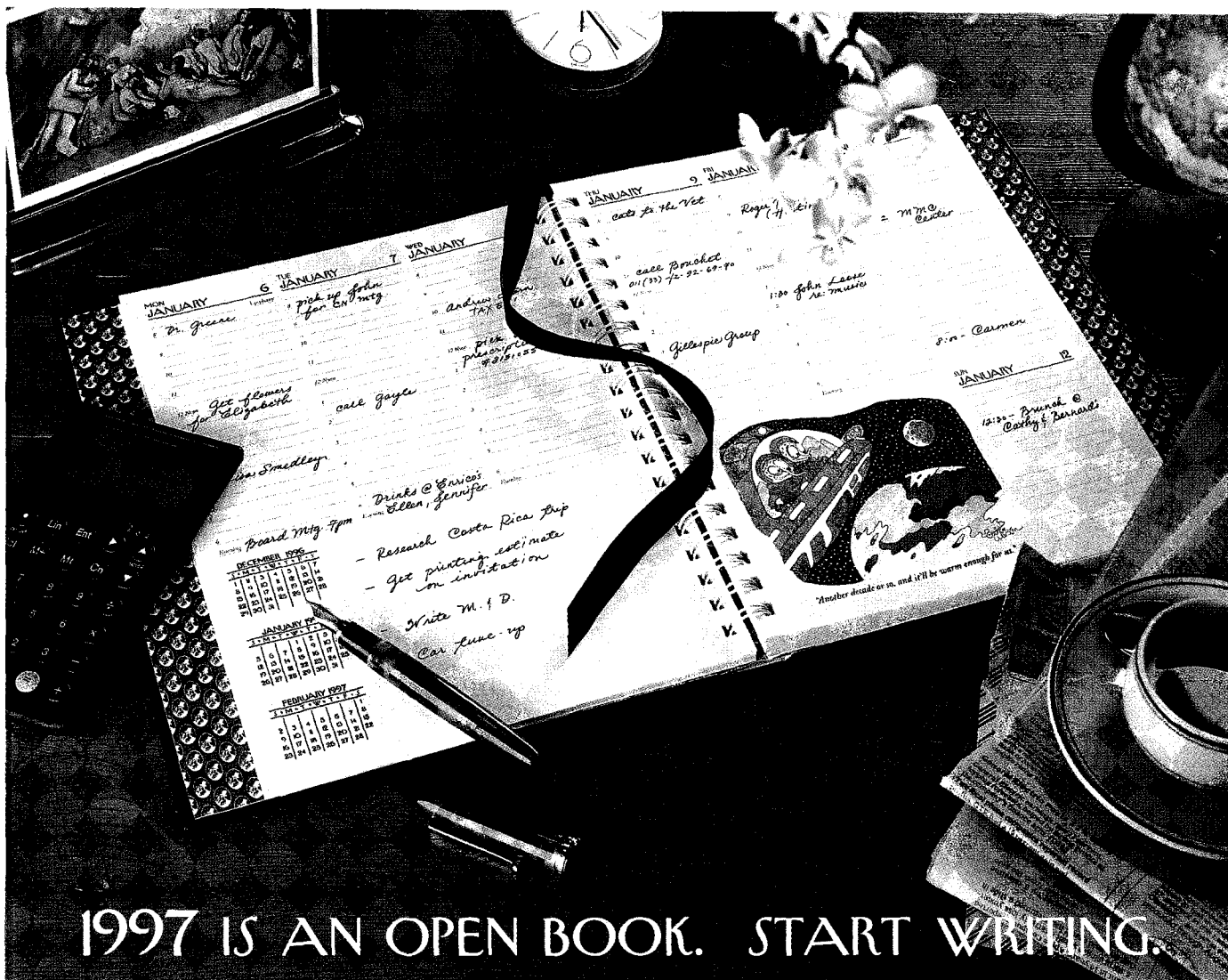
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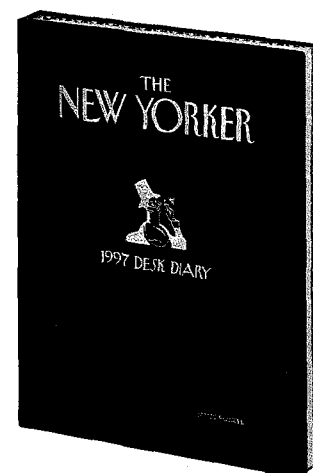
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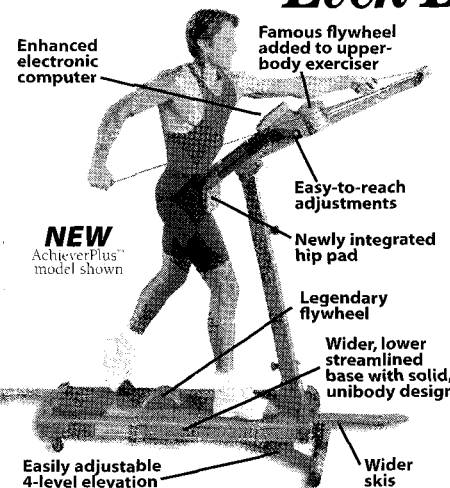
And yet the phenomenon of political pornography is real—indeed, prevalent. From the slurry of hardcover confessionals and likely fakes we are even led to believe that we know the size and shape of the First Member (cf. Flowers, Gennifer, "Sleeping with the President," p. 47). This is surely unprecedented. Nearly all the Kennedy porn—the supermarket-tabloid material—came long after he was dead. Today, the market will not be denied and will not wait. It seems that the national appetite for Clinton porn is exceeded only by the appetite for works about recovery from addiction, lawyers in trouble, running backs who murder their wives, and someone or something named Dilbert. The windows of even the most modest bookstores are thronged with Clintoniana. The few good citizens in the lot are crowded out by the gossips.

Lately, both Roger Morris, the former Nixon Administration official who quit the National Security Council over Vietnam and then wrote a superb biography of his former master, and R. Emmett Tyrell, Jr., the breeder of the right-wing attack dog *The American Spectator*, have published biographies that accuse the Clintons of condoning everything from C.I.A. drug-running to financial fraud. David Brock, famous for his assault on Anita Hill, has delivered a biography of Hillary Clinton in which he abjures the usual line of conservative attack and comes up with a rather novel approach that might be summarized thus: "Although the First Lady began as a Communist—after all, she did admire Saul Alinsky—she is probably not a felon. It's her husband who is the beast, though he is probably *not* a Communist. So far as I can tell."

None of these books, however, compare in sales or salacious vigor with "Unlimited Access" (Regnery; \$24.95), a memoir by Gary Aldrich, late of the White House security detail. Aldrich was one of two F.B.I. agents who did background checks on White House personnel in the Bush and Clinton Administrations. Aldrich preferred Bush. When the Clintons took over, "the cultural changes in the political staff of the White House were stark and often depressing," he maintains, purporting to speak for the F.B.I., the Secret Service, and the permanent staff. The Bush people, in Aldrich's portrayal, were trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and rev-

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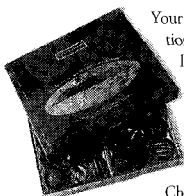
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erent. The Clinton crew is appalling: an arrogant lot of drug-dazed snots who treat the likes of Aldrich with disdain. In his narrative about life in the Clinton White House, Aldrich follows the conventions of pornographic form like a master: his ostensible purpose—an outraged denunciation of a group of impostors and cultural degenerates—is always leavened smartly with scenes of glorious raunch. Just as his sententious voice is about to bore us silly, Aldrich jumps in with a vivid scene of debauchery—which is, after all, why we have paid our twenty-four ninety-five. He reports second- and third-hand conversations and complaints about the Clinton people, as in this exchange between Dennis and Woody, another F.B.I. agent and a White House carpenter:

“Look. My guys have to be able to do their work around here, but if the Clinton staff won’t let ‘em, then how are they going to do it? I had two guys sent down to the first floor to do some work last night, and they couldn’t do the job. Do you know *why* they couldn’t do their job, Dennis?”

Woody was shaking with anger. “They couldn’t do their job because they walked into a locked office and found two Clinton staffers doing their thing on a desk! That’s why!”

“Woody, Woody, Woody, calm down, my friend. Let’s have a reality check here. Yes, I know it’s the White House, Woody, but there’s been sex here before, and there will be sex in offices here long after we’re gone. I don’t like it, and you don’t like it, and it’s disgusting, but it’s not an issue for the FBI, unless there is some kind of extramarital affair going on, so . . .”

“Look, Dennis, you don’t understand. It was *two* guys doing it!”

Not to be outdone, one female member of the permanent staff says:

“Big deal. You think that’s something? Last week I went down to the ladies room on the ground floor—you know the ones that have the shower stalls for joggers to use? Well, anyway, I walked in the door and heard the shower running, and as I turned the corner I noticed two forms in the shower stall, together. They were both women, and they were *really* going at it! One was standing and the other was on her knees, and you can guess the rest!”

Aldrich is utterly depressed by the gorillas in his midst. But things only get worse. He presents us with Melba, a cleaning woman of sterling character and unfailing forbearance, a domestic like Susan Nipper in “Dombey and Son.” She was “almost always cheerful,” he tells us, but was made “sad or depressed” by the character of the new White House gang. Aldrich, who is nothing if not vigilant about the well-being of the staff, asks Melba what is bothering her:

Melba thought for a moment, and a worried look crossed her face before she blurted, “Mr. Aldrich, sir, no harm intended but these new people are terrible! Every day we go into their

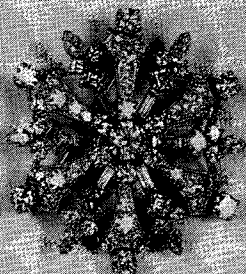
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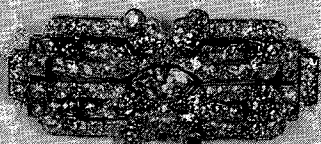
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offices and clean up after them, and the very next day it's as if we'd never been there before. They're messy people, Mr. Aldrich. These people are sloppy. Some are real slob, sir! They throw garbage on the floor, or they throw cups of coffee and miss the waste can and it splashes all over the wall. And *they* don't clean it up! . . . President Bush's people were much neater *and* much nicer to us. And that's the God's honest truth, sir. And Mr. Aldrich, you know that recycle program that President Bush started? Well, the soda cans, plastic coffee cups, white papers, and such are supposed to be separated, put into containers that are marked for each . . ."

And so on. Melba, Aldrich reports gravely, eventually took early retirement. "She didn't want to go, but she couldn't bear to stay," he writes. "Watching the White House deteriorate was just too hard."

Ms. Flowers is rather less offended by the sins of her President. Indeed, she reports in "Sleeping with the President" (Anonymous Press; \$16.95) that her lover was, in their "primal dance," blessed with "unbearable tenderness" and endurance. "I remember thinking that maybe this is the kind of drive a man needs to become president of the United States," Flowers recollects in tranquillity. The book includes an ad for the "Bill and Jennifer Love Tapes" (\$19.95; Visa and MasterCard accepted) and a photograph of one of Ms. Flowers's antique chairs "in my Little Rock apartment where Bill and I enjoyed many pleasurable hours sitting and talking."

No matter that most of this stuff has the ring of embellishment, if not of pulp fiction. One way or another—through Rush Limbaugh, through the jokes on Leno and Letterman—these tall tales enter the popular conversation. What is astonishing is how little it matters. We may be voyeurs, titillated by stories of Presidential escapades of every kind, but as public actors, as voting citizens, Americans turn deadly earnest. Witness the second Clinton-Dole debate and the behavior of the people called on to ask their questions. Surely San Diego is filled with plenty of people familiar with the tales of Clinton's lesser moments, and yet no one thought to ask about such things. American voters know that the sins of ambitious men are often outsized, even grotesque, but they have also come to know that these sins don't always have a bearing on a man's competence—at his day job, anyway. An indictment or a recession would undoubtedly alter the national forbearance, but for now we live and let live. Historians report that Abraham Lincoln failed to recycle his bottles and cans. Outrageous. But the Republic, we are told, survived this, too. ♦

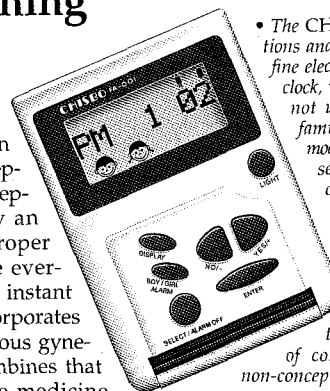
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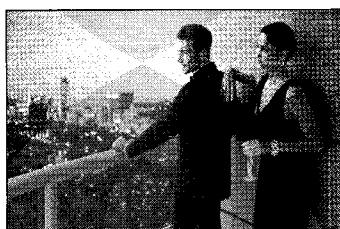
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DANGEROUS CURVES

Purity and sensuousness: understanding the real Ellsworth Kelly.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

WALL: Thus, have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And being done, thus Wall away doth go.
—*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, Scene 1.*

NOT since Shakespeare has anyone had so much fun with the dumbness of walls as Ellsworth Kelly. Restive at the way museum and living-room walls bridle the freedom of modern art, Kelly has devoted his career to busting loose from their confinement. "To hell with pictures," he has said. "They should be the wall." And at their strongest his paintings and reliefs eat up the wall's space, or else coöpt it as a bit player in his loud theatre of color and shape. Paradoxically, though, Kelly needs walls—straight old two-dimensional walls—in order to make us aware of their cloddish redundancy. The emphatically curvy Guggenheim is thus a potentially tricky site for an Ellsworth Kelly retrospective; Diane Waldman, who has installed his bulging, self-levitating forms around the spiral terraces of the Big Escargot, seems to have risked a curatorial nightmare. And there are, in fact, places where the rolling ramps disconcertingly jiggle the stillness against which Kelly's work needs to dance, float, or stand pat. All the waviness makes for spatial tautology, rather as if a Calder mobile were suspended from the undercarriage of a jet plane. For the most part, though, the architectural peculiarities of the Guggenheim collude, rather than collide, with the multidimensionality of Kelly's work, not least because the museum has straightened out the bay walls for this show. To catch sight of the big, crescent-shaped "Red Curve" beside the circle-segment "Blue Curve," framed by a half-moon opening high on the gallery wall, is to par-

ticipate, with sudden directness, in Kelly's dialogue between objects and their surrounding space. If you look over the circular well at "Black Ripe," on the opposite wall, the biomorphic blob seems to burgeon before your eyes, swelling, and pressing against its narrow white containing skin. At the Guggenheim, you can sense what Kelly means when he characterizes his work as constantly emerging—like the plants and flowers he likes to draw, unfolding at time-lapse speed.

Not that Kelly's best work—opulently colored and gracefully formed—needs much help from artfully contrived angles of vision. Its strength has always been its winning combination of perceptual subtlety and sensuous immediacy: a philosophical delicacy of vision pumped up into raw chromatic heft. It's this odd alliance of sweetness and might which has made Kelly such an awkward fit in the canon of American modernism, where, too often, the elemental purity of his work has been mistaken for jejune intuition. At one end of the opinion spectrum, critics nervous of pure shape, laconic theory, and untextured brushwork have tried to square his singular manner with the standard categories of art-crit convenience—the Mondrian succession; proto-minimalism; high formalism; "hard-edge"—none of which suit the case. At the other end are those who peer at the big, flat, bright shapes attached to the wall and, like one woman at the Guggenheim the other day, see nothing but big, flat, bright shapes attached to the wall, and exit swiftly, declaring, "Fuggeddaboutit!"

If anything can persuade the public not to forget about it but, instead, to give Kelly the rapt attention his art deserves, this retrospective will. One of

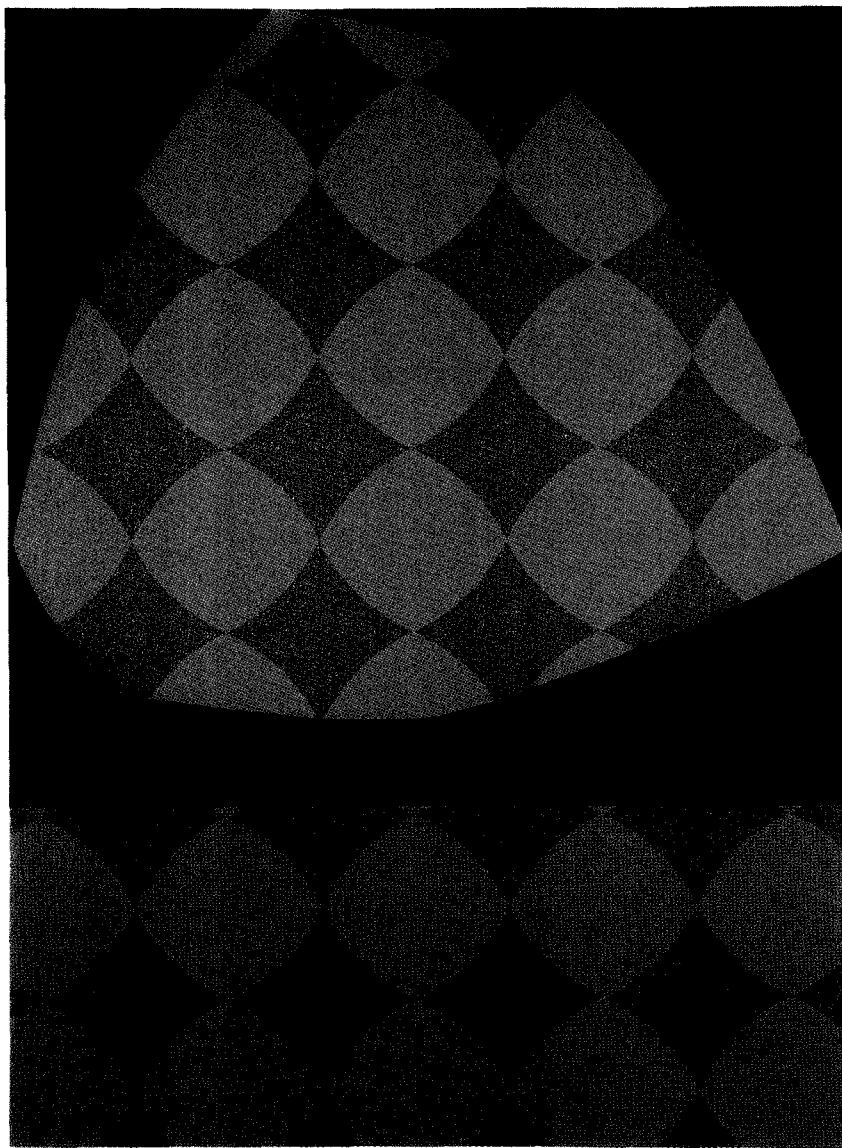
its many pleasures is its revelation of the play of Kelly's thoughtfulness—especially visible in the rich and essential exhibition of his works on paper. Though the progress from his early Paris years to his most recent sculptures and reliefs may seem a road full of sharp bends and swerves, his career has in fact followed remarkably consistent principles. All his work begins with a moment of perceptual serendipity—a shadow, a reflection, a partly obscured object or shape—from which he then shears away a visual fragment. That fragment, exposed to his creative imagination, becomes simultaneously fixed and transformed, and arrives at an entirely separate life, one that may distill, summarize, or imply its source but never actually describes it.

THIS opportunism of the broken glimpse first worked its sorcery on Kelly in Paris, in the late forties. He arrived there in 1948, after a stint at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts school, with a passionate interest in Romanesque architecture and Byzantine icons, both of which have remained with him most of his life. Walking an exhibition in the Musée d'Art Moderne in 1949, he noticed that the windows between the paintings were more arresting than the works themselves, in that they suggested conjunctions of lines and planes that could be detached from the material object and transposed, virtually intact, into an independent art form. The result, "Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris," retains the di-

mensions of its source, as well as the division between the lit upper and shaded lower halves, yet by its opaqueness cuts itself off from its functional history. As an epitaph for conventional painting, the work is inadvertently eloquent, since the equation of the pic-

Many of his seen-between-the-lines pieces from the French period sparkle with an improvised jazziness that is pure American-in-Paris—though distinctively Ellsworth, rather than Gene, Kelly. Broke and lonely, he took a nighttime job as a janitor at

the Marshall Plan offices, but managed, through his friend Jack Youngerman, to come to the attention of some of the eminences of post-war Paris modernism. Mondrian's literary collaborator, Michel Seuphor, introduced Kelly to Hans Arp, whose own poetic elementarism (along with that of Brancusi and Malevich) has clearly had a formative impact on him. Arp had experimented with chance composition (or, rather, with anti-composition), and Kelly applied some of its practices to his own way of seeing through half-closed eyes. Reflected city lights glinting on the river were sketched, broken into fragments, and reassembled, partly intuitively, to make the staccato black-and-white "Seine." "November Painting" consists merely of

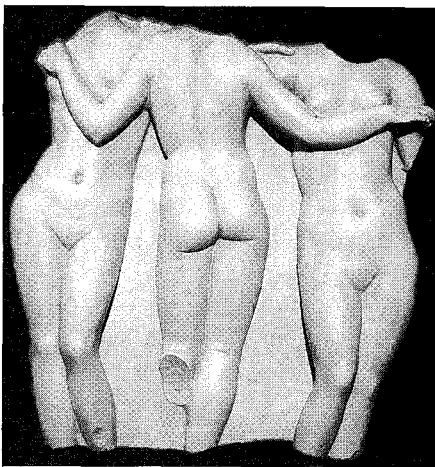


"Block Island II," one of Kelly's abstract pastorals, painted in 1960.

ture plane with a window, behind which the illusion of depth is perspectively ordered, has been the defining principle of representational art since the Renaissance. So there is something both mysteriously archaic and supremely modern about Kelly's work, with its hostility to the figure-ground distinction and its emulation of the flattening wall work of fresco and icon painters.

Not that Kelly has been immune to the impulses of the contemporary.

shreds of torn paper laid randomly on a gessoed panel, but somehow evokes both the present and the past—the scuttering motion of fallen leaves driven by the wind and also fossilized forms embedded in chalk. The exceptionally beautiful "Cité," with its swimming, irregular bands of black and white, originated in a dream that came to Kelly when he was staying overnight at the Cité Universitaire, in which his students at the American School were perched on scaffolding



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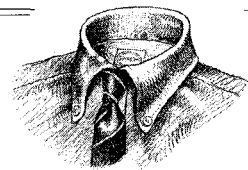
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like roosting jackdaws. The child's vision, at once ingenuous and wickedly shrewd, has never left Kelly, and is one of his most appealing traits: the faith in the mesmerizing power of intense color; the mischief of shapes that can be made to jump out of their skins and perform in unexpected ways. The free-standing sculpture "Pony," for example, was suggested to him in 1959 by Agnes Martin, who saw a bent can lid on his table and instructed him to "make that." The artist did more, transforming the shape into a suggestion of the rockers on a child's wooden horse, painting the aluminum primary yellow above and red below, and slicing the metal with clean simplicity, as if it were a kindergarten wall hanging, cut from brightly colored paper.

"PONY" also suggests the Manhattanization of Matisse. By 1954, Kelly had sold just two works, and when he read an article on Ad Reinhardt in *ARTnews* he wondered if New York might not be more receptive than Paris to his flat planes of color. It was and it wasn't. The intense gestural drama of Pollock's and Kline's Abstract Expressionism was about as far from Kelly's self-effacing purism as one could get, but, if the art world of Greenwich Village was unwelcoming, the fellow-artists in Coenties Slip, like Rauschenberg and Martin, were at that time coming to be interested in a manner of painting which proclaimed the absence rather than the presence of the painterly hand. And while Kelly remained far from the Abstract Expressionists, he responded to their energy by combining colors and angles for dynamic, rather than static, effect.

Though his work was shown in 1965 by Sidney Janis, who had also championed Mondrian, Kelly's panels of single colors, either separate or set in horizontal or vertical combinations, presupposed freedom, not order. Where the Dutch master's color planes all need to be seen at once for their meditative harmony to register with full force, Kelly's bands of what by Mondrian's standards are shockingly adulterated tints need to be read sequentially—like the planes of red,



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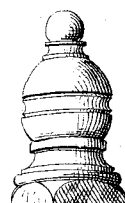
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gold, and orange in "Gaza," which gather speed and heat and head out of the top of the frame. While Mondrian's work seems to sit lotuslike in the harmonious austerity of his apartment, Kelly's is very much Out on the Town. Mondrian's art is meant to transcend the material world, Kelly's to celebrate his satisfaction with its surfaces and signs. Even Kelly's "Broadway," the monolithic block of scarlet that at first sight seems to be occupying virtually the entire canvas, proves on closer inspection to be notionally "hinged" against a white ground, the red bled off only at the top edge, so that the painting appears to be opening itself into an imagined lit yonder. "Rebound," which looks spectacular seen from the distance of an opposite Guggenheim terrace, can be read either horizontally, as two voluptuously fleshy white forms pleasurably brushing against each other, or vertically, as two opposing, sharpened black cups. But these alternative visions can never be simultaneously available: they leave the hypnotized gaze to bounce glassily between the one and the other.

Kelly's work in the early sixties is full of such wisecracks and counter-punches. At a time of cultural fast-forward, his outward, roving eye was gobbling up all kinds of schematized visual information (road maps, traffic signs, nautical flags, architectural and archeological plans), emptying them of their signifying meanings; he then looked, out of the corner of his inner eye, at what remained. Some of the most spirited paintings in this period are Kelly's version of on-the-road works—abstract suburban pastorals, with all middle-distance effects obliterated, as in the speedy green-and-white "Jersey," or in "Block Island II," where an aerial view has been scrambled together with a side-on image, and both are punched flat like the shapes on a banner or pennant.

In the late sixties and early seventies, Kelly intensified the process by which his sources were rendered down into elemental forms. Sometimes the tense relationship between two strong colors constitutes the drama of the pieces, and sometimes it is the relationship between a single color and the

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wall, so that a trapezoidally distorted rectangle is uncannily made to appear flying away from the spectator, through the wall barrier, and off into indeterminate space. It may be here, confronted with opaquely laid, simple color shapes, that the fuggeddaboutit lobby signs off, and, indeed, there are one or two moments in this exploratory period where the obsession with dead-flat comes perilously close to inert. More surprising is the degree to which an apparently elementary juxtaposition of color shapes can open up an entire shifting universe of tension, relaxation, conflict, and serenity, so that the economy of the means is out of all proportion to the magnitude of the effect. Anyone still in doubt should go stand in front of "Blue Curve III" and sense the circle segment slowly rising against its surmounting white triangle, the lower edge of which has been curved so that it seems to be both restraining and yielding to the inexorable ascent. Or the even simpler 1970 "White Black," in which the upper panel, though actually painted as flatly as the lower, contrives the effect of infinity against which the white panel stands as a denying barrier. This is pure magic—the kind of wordless revelation that only the most confident abstraction can deliver, and it's light-years away from the design-driven formalism of which Kelly has been unobservantly accused.

THOUGH Kelly is a skilled manipulator of optical values, there is no cheap deceit about his practice. The ingenuity with which color shapes are brought together to give the impression of delicate movement—a slide or a shift—belongs to his ambition (shared philosophically, but not practically, with more austere minimalists, like Donald Judd, Richard Serra, and Tony Smith) to collapse the distinction between sculpture and painting, figure and ground. Kelly's flattened menhirlike columns, especially as they are sited in the Guggenheim's galleries, look ethereally two-dimensional, while some of the most ambitious recent paintings are true reliefs, mounted several inches from the wall, so that the play of shadow gives them lift and motion. The nineties work, carefully lit

by the artist himself together with Diane Waldman, represents a consummation of his desire to distill a universal language from elemental forms. There is not a trace of monotony here. The closely adhering shapes of "Orange and Gray," for example, one curved and the other triangular, are put in perfect equipoise with each other, so that they share a single contour, whereas in "Orange Red Relief (For Delphine Seyrig)" the dominant orange square appears to be arrested in its heavy fall away from the inadequately supporting red.

Many of these unresolved tensions and motions have a directly sensual impact, which corresponds to the primordial coupling of yoni and lingam that Kelly, as a young man in France, had suggested with his phallic "Kilometer Marker" and softly folded "Mandorla." But the effect, I think, is less psychological than anthropological: the artist reaching for forms, akin to those revered by ancient religions, that are simultaneously spiritual and earthly—both rooted in the ground and heading, like the birds that the child Kelly copied from Audubon, for the heavens. This, at least, seems apparent in the marvellous room, in the high gallery, where Kelly's most recent "Curves" are shown, in calculated relationships with each other: the sharp yellow triangle, its left-hand edge eaten away so that the wall itself seems to be pressing it outward, facing a serenely stationed green; the opulent belly of the red curve arching away from the trapezoidal black. Together, they appear about ready to loose their moorings from the Guggenheim walls and drift off out of the museum and over Central Park—great weightless monuments turning, rotating, and shifting like the dimly seen planetary bodies whose celestial music they seem, mysteriously, to echo. ♦

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—A member of the commission set up to run the New Orleans land casino resigned Wednesday.

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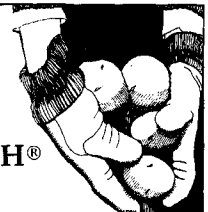
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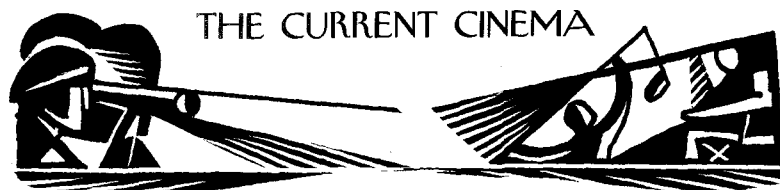
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TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Carcattera's Dead End Kids, and Vonnegut's man without qualities.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

BARRY LEVINSON'S "Sleepers" is a doggedly faithful adaptation of Lorenzo Carcaterra's 1995 best-seller (of the same name), which purported to be a memoir of the author's youth in

herently more incredible than those of, say, "Lorenzo's Oil," "Europa, Europa," "Apollo 13," or "Schindler's List." The problem with "Sleepers"—book and movie—is that this "true" story is *exactly* as strange



Jason Patric and Brad Pitt in "Sleepers": up from the streets and onto the screen.

Hell's Kitchen, his horrifying experiences in an upstate reformatory, and his participation, years later, in an elaborate scheme to avenge the abuses that he and his friends suffered at the hands of the reform school's guards. The story Carcaterra told was lurid, sensational, and improbable, and the book quickly aroused suspicion that it was a hoax—a tall tale disguised as a gritty, up-from-the-streets autobiography. A Hell's Kitchen priest whose church is the model for the one in Carcaterra's story flatly accused the author of lying, and, now that the movie is in release, he's levelling the same charge at the filmmakers. But the priest's denunciation isn't the only reason—or even the primary one—for a reader or a viewer to sense that there's something fishy about "Sleepers." The implausibility of the story isn't what makes it dubious, either: most of us have no trouble believing that truth is stranger than fiction, and the events that Carcaterra relates aren't in-

as fiction, and in exactly the same way.

The opening line of the picture—read, over misty slo-mo shots of boys at play, by the solemn voice of a grownup "Lorenzo Carcaterra" (Jason Patric)—is "This is a true story about friendships that run deeper than blood." (It's the first of many examples of the book's deadly prose that are reverentially preserved in Levinson's screenplay.) When spoken by an actor, of course, these words needn't be understood literally. Levinson knows that the movie viewer automatically adjusts his expectations to conform to the less rigorous factual standards of dramatic art: the idea that the story *might* be true is now just an intriguing hypothesis—which, if accepted, might enhance the picture's emotional impact—rather than a necessary condition of the audience's belief. The movie encourages us, that is, to adopt a take-it-or-leave-it attitude toward the narrator's veracity, and although that's a cunning strategy, it



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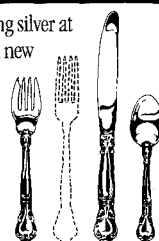
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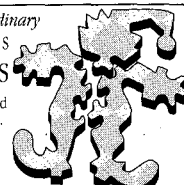
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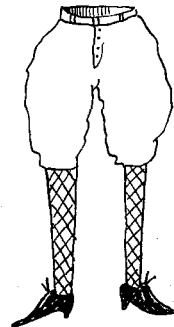
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isn't, ultimately, a wise one: coyness is a poor substitute for conviction, especially in a film that demands two and a half hours of our time. And, in a peculiar way, Levinson's fidelity to the details of the book actually serves to intensify the audience's doubts. Onscreen, "Sleepers" plays as a thoroughly old-fashioned crime melodrama, loaded with the tough-guy clichés of Cagney pictures and Dead End Kids vehicles, and also with more recent conventions, borrowed from Scorsese and the "Godfather" films—and all those hoary motifs come straight from the book. Most writers complain that filmmakers adapt their work too freely. Carcaterra should envy those writers: Levinson's scrupulous movie version of "Sleepers" only emphasizes how movie-ish the book itself is.

Essentially, the idea that truth is stranger than fiction says very little about "truth" and quite a lot about "fiction." It's a simple aesthetic judgment—an acknowledgment that invented narratives rarely do justice to the complexity and the variety of experience. Although the artifices of storytelling can be pleasurable in themselves, they're also, at a certain level of familiarity, sources of distrust. Long before the intricate revenge plot of "Sleepers" reaches its neat resolution, the story has trafficked in so many stereotypes and generated so much pithy, street-poetic dialogue that the audience's guard is up. In the movie's first section—the action unfolds, conveniently, in three distinct acts—we're introduced to four tough-but-good boys: Lorenzo (Joe Perrino), who's slightly more bookish than the others, and obviously the observer type, awaiting his fulfillment as a rueful narrator; Michael (Brad Renfro), who is handsome, charismatic, fearless, and a little remote, and is clearly destined to become Brad Pitt; and Tommy (Jonathan Tucker) and John (Geoff Wigdor), a matched set of sidekicks, barely worth distinguishing from each other. The kids zip through the harsh but protective streets of Hell's Kitchen in the sixties, watched over by a savvy but compassionate priest, Father Bobby Carillo (Robert De Niro); a vulgar but wise shopkeeper called Fat Mancho (Frank Medrano); and the intimidating but loyal local don, King Benny (Vittorio Gassmann). Levinson, blindly following Carcaterra's lead, depicts the rugged neighborhood as a kind of urban paradise, in which fresh-faced, mischievous boys bond and the air vibrates

with the optimistic sounds of the Four Seasons and the Beach Boys.

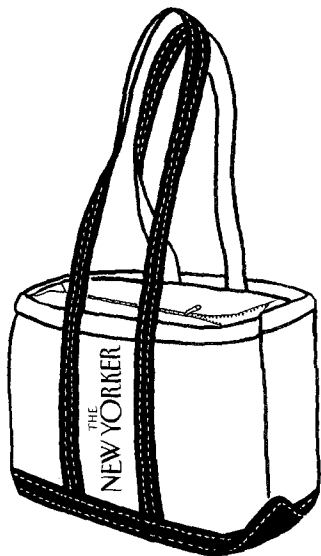
The young heroes, however, are rudely expelled from their doo-wop, surf-music heaven after one of their pranks goes terribly wrong and nearly kills an innocent bystander. They're sent—Act II—to a hellish reformatory, and they find themselves at the mercy of a crew of demonic guards: these sadists, led by a grinning predator named Nokes (Kevin Bacon), beat and rape the boys at every opportunity,



usually pouncing on them in packs, like the hungry velociraptors of "Jurassic Park." The movie doesn't linger on the details of the abuse, preferring to race through a few standard prison-picture tropes (the cafeteria fight, and so on) and to render the rapes in brief, blurry black-and-white montages. Act II's primary function, in any event, is to set up the courtroom theatrics of Act III. Thirteen years later, Tommy (now played by Billy Crudup) and John (Ron Eldard) stroll into a Hell's Kitchen pub and, seeing their old nemesis Nokes sitting at a table, amble over to him, identify themselves, and gleefully shoot him dead, in front of several witnesses. Michael, his metamorphosis into Brad Pitt finally complete, has also, it seems, managed to graduate from law school and to land a job in the Manhattan District Attorney's office. He has a plan, which he outlines to a slack-jawed Lorenzo (now Jason Patric) on a dark, rainy night: he'll prosecute the case himself, in such a way that the horrors of the reformatory will be exposed and the killers will go free.

With the help of a cooperative alcoholic defense lawyer (played by Dustin Hoffman), the lovable scoundrels of Hell's Kitchen, and a neighborhood girl named Carol (Minnie Driver)—who constitutes the extremely tiny women's auxiliary of this boys' club—Michael and Lorenzo implement their wild plan, giving the movie audience its second opportunity in the last few months to root for the acquittal of murderers. ("A Time to Kill" was the first.) Is this a trend? Maybe it is and maybe it isn't, but the courtroom setting is, if nothing else, a nifty way of dressing up primitive revenge fantasies for the refined sensibilities of upscale audiences. As an additional attraction for the serious-minded viewer, "Sleepers" supplies a brow-furrowing moral dilemma: Lorenzo asks the straight-arrow Father Bobby to sup-

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ply an alibi for the defendants, and thus perjure himself. Neither Carcaterra nor Levinson has any real interest in the workings of the priest's conscience; once the ethical question has been posed, the movie keeps him offscreen, to heighten the suspense of whether or not he'll take the stand. And when he does (everyone in the theatre knows he will), the headlong momentum of dramatic logic, as always, triumphs over the back-and-forth motion of moral ambiguity. His perjury is the climax that this courtroom melodrama requires, and if he has any misgivings the movie hustles him off the stage before he can express them; there's no sense complicating our reactions to the tidy resolutions of this tidy plot.

Levinson's direction is entirely predictable throughout: most of his effort appears to have gone into creating a weighty, important-movie mood and building anticipation for the violent scenes and the big for-Academy-Award-consideration emotional confrontations. Most of the actors wind up crushed by the plot machinery: De Niro, for instance, begins well but loses force as the picture goes along, because the scenes that would give his character some depth are precisely those which the narrative's crude, overdetermined structure can't accommodate. In "Sleepers," the performers with the least to do are the lucky ones; Gassmann, Medrano, and Hoffman all manage to have some fun with their small roles, while Pitt, Patric, and Driver look confused and miserable. The sad fact is that, whether "Sleepers" is a true story or not, it's so mechanical that it *feels* false. At one point in the picture, the adult Lorenzo justifies the legal deception that he and Michael are carrying out by musing (to Carol) that, since in Hell's Kitchen "everything is a shakedown or a scam, why should this be any different?" For Carcaterra's sake, you have to hope that "Sleepers" is a scam. If it isn't, he has done something worse than lying: he has imagined his own life as a perfectly formulaic Hollywood movie.

THE hero of Kurt Vonnegut's early (1961) novel "Mother Night" is a forlorn man named Howard W. Campbell, Jr.—an American writer, living in Germany in the thirties, who is recruited to spy for American intelligence. His wartime reports are encoded in weekly radio broadcasts, in which Campbell, identifying himself as "the last free American," smoothly explicates the anti-Semitic policies of the Third Reich and—the Nazi

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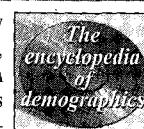
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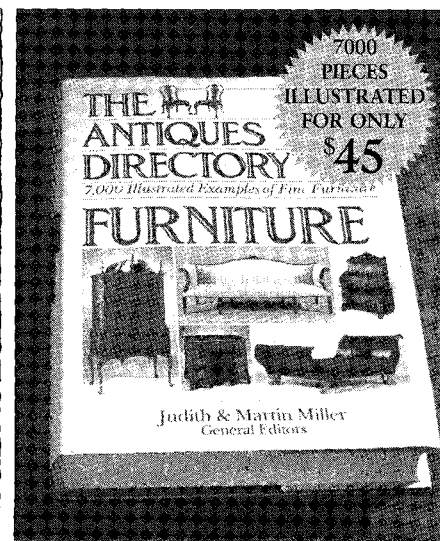
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propaganda ministry hopes—thereby erodes the morale of the American troops. After the war, the spymasters refuse to publicly acknowledge him as an agent, and, devastated by the death of his German wife, toward the end of the war, he settles hopelessly into an anonymous, lonely-guy existence in New York. He broods over the intolerable possibility that his broadcasts may have done far more harm than good; then, suddenly, years later, his identity (as a Nazi propagandist, not a spy) is revealed and he becomes the quarry of Israeli Nazi-hunters and Soviet agents—and also becomes, to his chagrin, the idol of an unsavory group of American racists and fascists. The moral, expressed by Vonnegut in his characteristic cosmic-one-liner style, is "We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be."

Keith Gordon's film of "Mother Night" (which has a screenplay by Robert B. Weide) tells this interesting story pretty skillfully, skipping nimbly back and forth in time as Campbell (Nick Nolte) composes his memoirs in an Israeli prison cell. The picture is always engrossing but never especially persuasive. Although Gordon dramatizes effectively everything but the broad satiric scenes featuring the American fascists (which aren't very funny in the novel, either), that glib moral of Vonnegut's stubbornly refuses to come through: it reaches us only in garbled, indistinct fragments, like a jammed radio transmission. The author's jaunty philosophizing may not bear a lot of scrutiny. (Are we necessarily what we pretend to be? And shouldn't we be careful anyway?) But this moral, for all its dubiousness, is the only organizing principle that "Mother Night" has—the theme that prevents the rambling, picaresque plot from degenerating into chaos. The inadvertent irony of the movie is that, while the story attempts to investigate the paradox of acting (and the director is himself an actor), the point is muddled, in part, by the miscasting of the central role. Nolte gives a fine, intelligent performance, but he's too emotionally direct—too straightforward an actor—to evoke the slipperiness of a man-without-qualities figure like Campbell; he's not hooded or evasive enough. There isn't a moment in "Mother Night" when you believe that Nolte is what he's pretending to be, and, as a consequence, there isn't a moment when you believe that Howard Campbell is, either. ♦



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"Taking Sides" plays a simpleminded game with the past.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

RONALD HARWOOD'S "Taking Sides," now at the Brooks Atkinson, is part fact and part fiction: it concerns the postwar fate of Wilhelm Furtwängler, the legendary conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, at the hands of the American military, which, along with the British military and the Germans themselves, investigated his ties to the Nazis. Furtwängler was duly interrogated, and was cleared of all charges, but, as Harwood says in an introductory note to the play, he "was never able to cleanse himself entirely of the Nazi stench that still clings to his memory." The play is set in the American zone of occupied Berlin in 1946, in the office of a cocky, self-righteous (and fictional) Army officer named Steve Arnold, and essentially it's a confrontation between Major Arnold (played by Ed Harris), who is the designated interrogator, and Furtwängler (Daniel Massey). Well, no, it isn't, actually: it's, unfortunately—and, as long as I'm in an ad-

verbial mode, tediously and unilluminatingly—a confrontation between what they represent. If Furtwängler had the stench of Nazism about him, "Taking Sides," which was first produced in England last year, has the instructional smell of the classroom about it; if it contained fewer swear words, it would stand a chance of being embraced by high-school teachers, whose job it is to give young people their first official lessons in moral ambiguity. You remember: "Is So-and-So"—insert literary character of your choice—"good or bad? Explain." Um, let



Morality play: Ed Harris and Daniel Massey as a righteous interrogator and his famous subject, Wilhelm Furtwängler.

me think—both? That kind of answer—correct but pat, leading nowhere—is as far as "Taking Sides" goes in exploring right and wrong. Harwood, who is the president of International PEN as well as

an accomplished writer, should know that pointing out the existence of ambiguity isn't the same as thinking about it. Major Arnold, who in civilian life was an insurance-claims assessor, repeatedly refers to Furtwängler as a "bandleader" and boasts of being bored by Beethoven. Early on, we get the gist of his agenda; as he tells his assistant, he's not interested in "justice, evidence, facts." He's interested in "nailing the bastard." Arnold's a tough-talking blowhard—in short, the kind of person who, though he says he was assigned to interrogate Furtwängler

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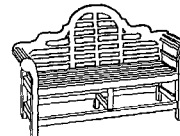


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precisely because he had never heard of him and therefore wouldn't be swayed by his "greatness," would never, I believe, have been allowed anywhere near such a proceeding. I can't prove that, but neither has Harwood proved that the kangaroo court he depicts bears any resemblance to reality. And this is reality we're talking about. Arnold is supposed to "symbolize" the wrongness of unquestioned rightness, but he's just the flip side of the dated, B-movie caricature of American soldiers in Europe—he's the one who *doesn't* go around handing out chocolate bars and silk stockings.

Harris, who, under the direction of David Jones, plays Arnold as a pants-hitching, strutting, I'll-show-'em bantam, is matched tic for tic by Massey, whose portrayal of Furtwängler is weirdly Frankensteinian. When he comes into the office, his legs and body stop but his arms keep moving, flapping around as though he had no control over them. His eyes roll up in his head when he's questioned, and he seems to have only the dimmest comprehension of what's happening (despite the fact that he's been through this process once before: a tribunal in Austria has already investigated and cleared him). Arnold and Furtwängler have only two encounters in the play; the rest of our time is spent watching Arnold react to the increasing evidence that he doesn't have a case. The characters who connect the dots of the plot also embody ambiguity at its simplest: the Americanized Jew who worships Furtwängler; the daughter of an apparently heroic German who, it turns out, plotted against Hitler only after he realized that Germany was going to lose the war; a hysterical woman who doesn't seem credible yet has evidence that Furtwängler took pains to save Jews.

For his part, Harwood's Furtwängler is given a lot to say about the relationship between art and politics. Toward the end of the play, in the big showdown, he says to Arnold that an artist must have political convictions, "because he is, after all, a human being." But he goes on, "I know that a single performance of a great masterpiece was a stronger and more vital negation of the spirit of Buchenwald and Auschwitz than words. Human beings are free wherever Wagner and Beethoven are played. Music transported them to regions where the torturers and murderers could do them no harm." Now it's Ar-

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nold's turn to explode: "Have you ever smelled burning flesh? . . . You setting culture and art and music against the millions put to death by your pals? The pals you could call to save a couple of Jews when thousands, millions of them, were being annihilated?" This apallingly unreal exchange—a pileup of pieties and platitudes—characterizes the play's relentless retreat from dramatic and intellectual complexity into complacent, it's-a-opsy-turvy-world banality. Facts, information, and insight are in shockingly short supply in "Taking Sides," considering its subject. It's a deeply shallow play.

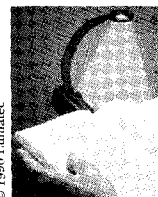
THERE may be a shapely play inside Nicky Silver's baggy new comedy, "Fit to Be Tied," at Playwrights Horizons, but I wish someone—the producer, say, or the director, or even the writer—had bothered to do some serious trimming before sending this latest creation out on the runway. David Warren's production is clean and clever, but the writing is all over the place. Silver's plays are often marked by unexpected, jarring shifts in tone, but in this one he doesn't seem to be in full control; he mixes farce with sentimentality, which is about as winning a combination as hair and chewing gum or Billy Wilder and Frank Capra. Set in the apartment of a rich, loveless young man named Arloc (T. Scott Cunningham), the play revolves around the relationships between Arloc; his mother, Nessa (Jean Smart); and the beautiful blond angel Boyd (Matt Keeslar), whom Arloc tricks into staying with him. Even when Silver isn't at his best, there are bits of brilliance: he writes terrific rants for his women, and Nessa, a narcissistic child-mom, has some hilarious riffs, which Smart delivers with a hard, bright polish.

The truly great performance of the moment, however, is given by the stellar Dana Ivey—let's just go ahead and call her Dame Dana—as a repressed, religious senator's wife in Christopher Durang's otherwise disappointing "Sex and Longing." The producers, Lincoln Center Theatre, should have thought twice about the play before they, as President Clinton would say, drug it into the Cort. As for the ill-served Durang, I can only hope that what the bartender said to the brokenhearted Judy Garland in "Easter Parade" is true: "For every rose that withers and dies, another blooms in its stead." ♦

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CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN: To build a bridge across time instead of just across a river, bay, inlet—it was thrilling. Nobody'd ever done that before, not even the ancient Romans. But the engineering problems were actually the least of it. Siting the thing! You see, nobody had specified where it would start, and we had survey teams in D.C., down in Arkansas, and wandering around out there in Kansas, and had meetings and more meetings, before we realized: it didn't matter where the hell it started. Anywhere, as long as it was the present. And, of course, it was always the present, at any given moment. What a relief!

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: The bridge would be totally obsolete right after midnight, January 1, 2000, because by then everybody who was going over to the next century would be there already. Since it only had to stay up for the one day, we

cut corners, and that helped bring the cost down and get some of the budget hawks off our backs. The thing was structurally very rickety, to be truthful. Didn't even bother painting it. One decision came early: it was going to be a one-way bridge, period. Allowing for return trips to the twentieth century—no thanks. Talk about budget-busting. Think of the research work alone!

LEGAL ADVISER: Frankly, we goofed on the legal aspects. People see a bridge, they say let's walk over, drive over, whatever, for the day. But this bridge is across time, so once they do it they can't go back, ever. Oh, the lawsuits! People by the thousands caught with their houses, savings, pets left behind in the previous century and screaming blue murder about it. One lousy sign—"You Are Now Leaving the Twentieth Century, All Exits Final"—would have been enough.

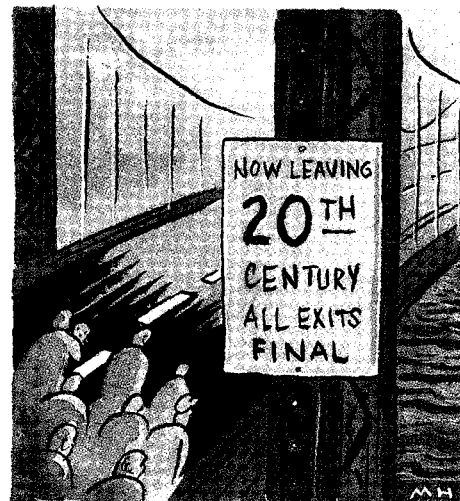
CABLE STRINGER: It was a beautiful sight, once you got up on the towers. Awesome, really. That arc of steel reaching over into the next century, and the other end so far away that no matter where you stood the bridge just seemed to disappear into a kind of mist. We knew there were hundreds of guys working on it somewhere farther along the span—close enough to the next century to reach out and touch it—but nobody realized that to finish

the bridge these guys would have to physically cross over. That's why none of them was seen again until after midnight on December 31st. Then there they all were, waiting for us on the other side. Famous as the early astronauts for a while.

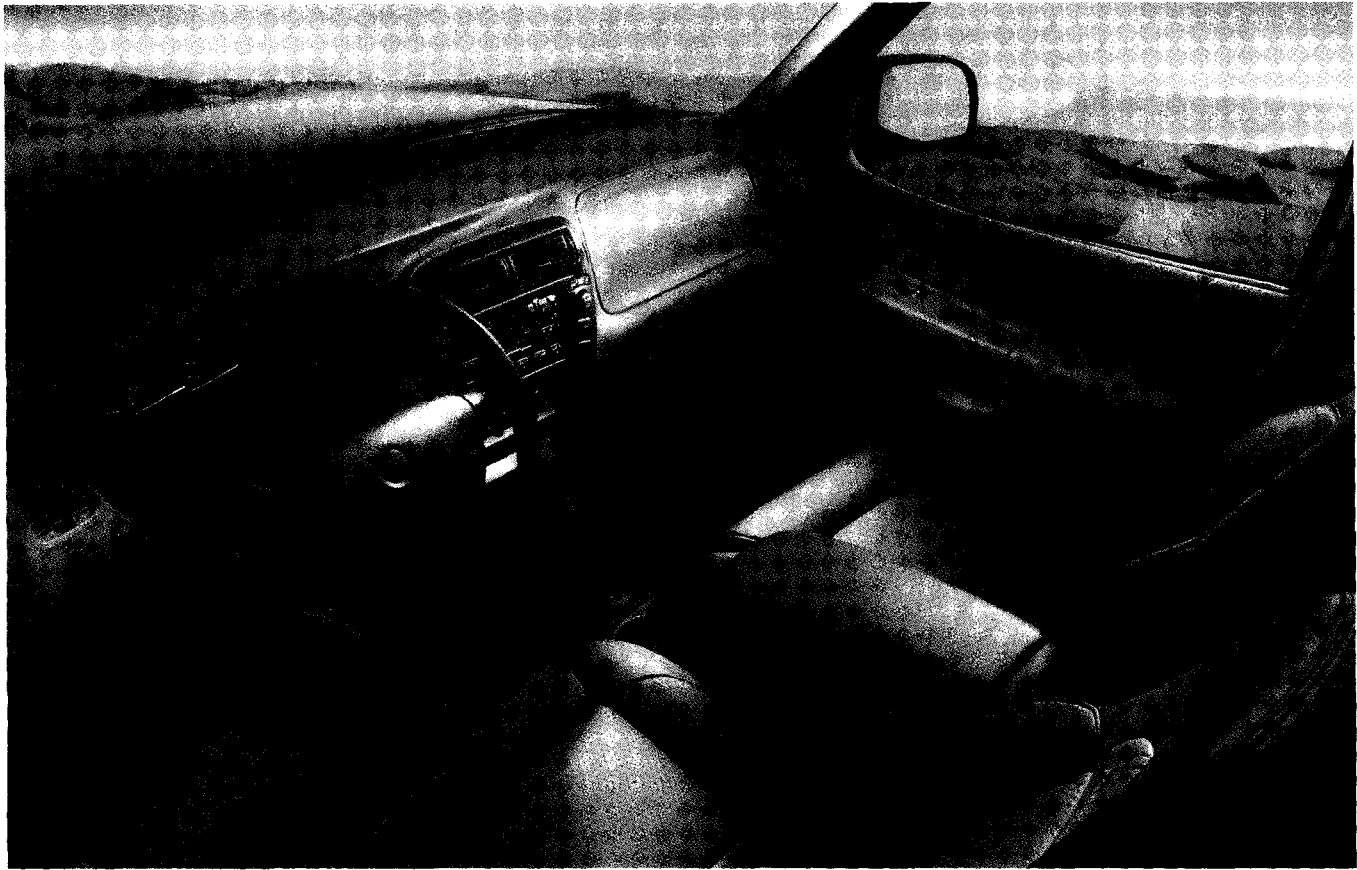
TRAFFIC POLICEMAN: They had to let the Hell's Angels, junkies, all the convicts in jail, who knows how many North Korean spies—just everyone, no exceptions whatsoever—cross that bridge. It was idiotic to build only one, that's for sure. Sounded so nice in a political speech, but jeez, the crowding was awful. Like a fool, I left my squad car parked on the twentieth-century side during the opening ceremonies on New Year's Eve. After the ball fell, I ran back to try and get it. Bonk! Like running into a glass wall.

REPORTER: Dole and Clinton, of course, both claimed credit for the bridge, and the ribbon-cutting ceremony had to be this really awkward business with both of them clutching the same pair of scissors. Jesse Jackson got in there somehow and up-

staged Gore giving a speech—endless—about the meaning of time. Perot held a press conference a few feet away, saying the twenty-first century would have come to us anyway, bridge or not, and we'd bankrupted ourselves for nothing. Perot was right on the facts, but he had no sense of political symbolism. None at all. ♦



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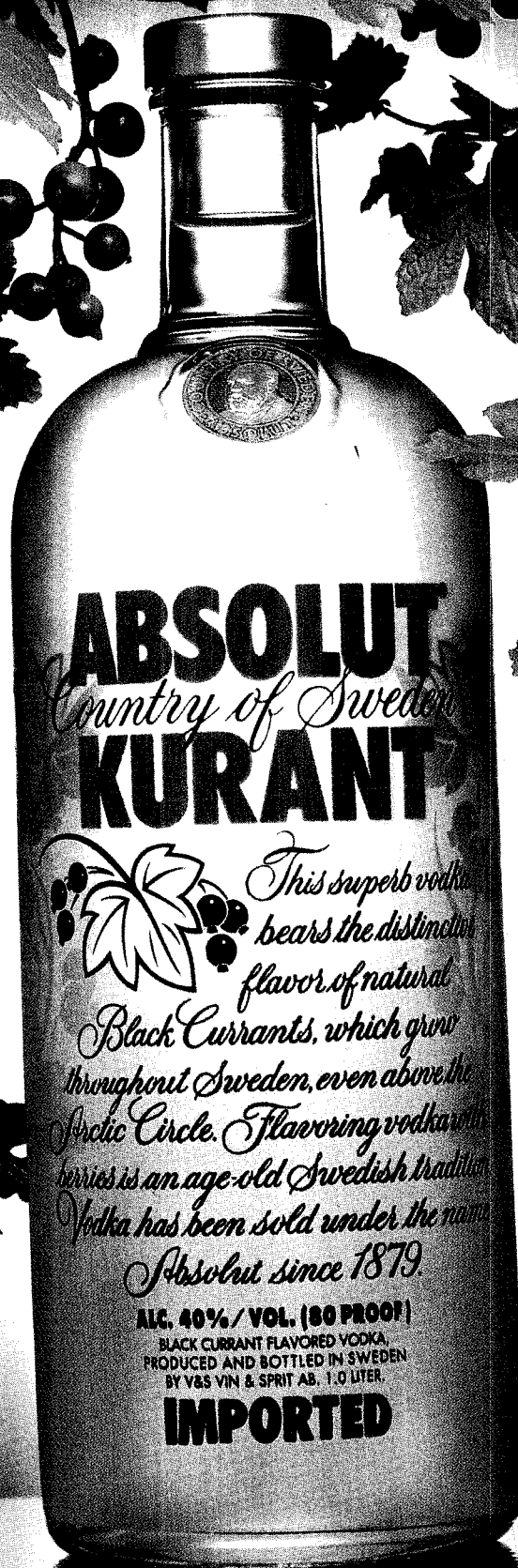


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